

which ultimately aims (i.e. at the canonical level) at testifying to Jesus Christ.

Rather than take a stand with either the exegete or the systematician exclusively, then, the biblical theologian seeks instead to foster an interdisciplinary approach to biblical interpretation which aims at textually mediated theological truth. Biblical theology is nothing less than a theological hermeneutic, a *regula legeri* (a rule of reading). As such, biblical theology is not merely a matter of repackaging the conceptual content of the Scriptures, but a way of having one's heart, mind, and imagination alike schooled in the ways of seeing and experiencing the world according to the many literary forms and the one canon, which together constitute the word of God written.

See also: BIBLICAL THEOLOGY; UNITY AND DIVERSITY OF SCRIPTURE; RELATIONSHIP OF OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT.

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Blomberg, Craig L. "The Unity and Diversity of Scripture." In NEW DICTIONARY O

## The Unity and Diversity of Scripture

### Introduction

Throughout most of the history of the church, the unity of \*Scripture has been assumed and its diversity taken less seriously. Apparent contradictions or tensions between one part of Scripture and another have been harmonized. Typology has been seen as a key to understanding the NT use of the OT. Difficult

passages have been allegorized, and the principle of the *regula fidei* ('the rule of faith') has led to clearer texts being used to interpret more opaque ones. Since the Enlightenment, however, much of this has changed. A salutary emphasis on biblical theology – hearing the message of each book and each author in its own terms – has developed, but in consequence the unity of the Bible has often been

denied. The last 200 years of biblical interpretation have been dominated by claims that there are irreconcilable conflicts among the authors of Scripture, and by theories of the tradition history of both Testaments that conflict with the data presupposed by the canonical form of the Scriptures themselves.

A movement of the 1950s and 1960s, sometimes called simply the biblical theology movement, reacted against these trends and sought to identify 'centres' that unified either the OT or the NT or both. That quest, however, has been largely abandoned. Today unity in Scripture is perceived for the most part only by advocates of canonical criticism and by evangelicals who continue to believe that Scripture does not contradict itself as a theological corollary of their acceptance of its inspiration. D. N. Freedman (*The Unity of the Hebrew Bible*), J. Hultgren (*The Rise of Normative Christianity*) and J. Reumann (*Variety and Unity in New Testament Thought*) are among the most important recent exceptions from other theological traditions.

Of the many issues that could be profitably explored, we will focus on three: 1. the quest for a centre in each Testament and in the Bible as a whole; 2. a model for the unfolding unity of the biblical narrative; and 3. the question of how to respond to the diversity (especially the apparent contradictions of Scripture), including the issue of 'development'.

### Centres in Scripture

#### The OT

Many different proposals have emerged for a unifying centre of the OT. Various scholars attempt to trace the predominance of a single theme, for example, covenant, promise, the mighty acts of God, communion, the life of God's people, dominion, justice or righteousness. Others identify pairs of themes, for example, law and promise, election and obligation, creation and covenant, the rule of God and communion with humankind or salvation and blessing. Some pairs of themes involve polarities, such as the presence versus the absence of God or the legitimation of structure versus the embracing of pain. It has been argued that holding together these antinomies is a key to finding unity within diversity. Still other writers point simply to Yahweh, or God, as the sole unifying element

within the older Testament.

Certain scholars find unity in a complex of multiple themes. Hasel concludes, 'A seemingly successful way to come to grips with the question of unity is to take the various major longitudinal themes and concepts and explicate where and how the variegated theologies are intrinsically related to each other' (*New Testament Theology*, pp. 218-219). One of the most ambitious and compelling proposals for finding a unifying structure comes from E. A. Martens (*God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology* [N. Richland Hills, 3 1998]), who perceives a fourfold design of God in Exodus 5:22 – 6:8 which recurs in every major section of the OT: to bring deliverance; to summon a peculiar people; to offer himself for his people; to know and give them land.

#### The NT

Again, single themes have been suggested as a centre for the NT: kingdom, gospel, righteousness, justification, reconciliation, faith, new creation, salvation or salvation history, eschatology, Israel or the new Israel, the cross and/or the resurrection, the love of God, existential anthropology and covenant. Perhaps most common of all, Jesus (or Christology more generally) has been identified as a centre.

Again, various combinations of themes have also been proposed. C. H. Dodd (*The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*) turned to the speeches in Acts and the pre-Pauline creeds to find elements of an early kerygmatic summary of foundational doctrine. A. M. Hunter (*Introducing New Testament Theology* [London, 1957], p. 66) suggested that a reporter's digest of an early Christian sermon might have read like this: 'The prophecies are fulfilled, and the New Age has dawned. The Messiah, born of David's seed, has appeared. He is Jesus of Nazareth, God's Servant, who went about doing good and healing by God's power, was crucified according to God's purpose, was raised from the dead on the third day, is now exalted to God's right hand, and will come again in glory for judgment. Therefore let all repent and believe and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.'

D. Wenham ('Appendix', pp. 12-13) suggests a multiplex centre involving the *context*

of God the creator's intervening through Jesus to complete his saving purposes for his people, the *centre* of Jesus as Spirit-filled Messiah and Son of God, the *community* of those who receive Jesus and his salvation by faith, having the Holy Spirit of sonship and being called to live as a restored community in loving fellowship with God and one another, and the *climax* of the mission of restoration completed at the Lord's return when he judges the world and finally overthrows evil to vindicate God's people and restore all creation. Finally, E. Lemcio (in *JSNT* 33, p. 6) finds a six-part kerygma which recurs in all major portions of the NT: '(1) God who (2) sent (Gospels) or raised (3) Jesus. (4) A response (receiving, repentance, faith) (5) towards God (6) brings benefits (variously described).'

#### The entire Bible

The most common examples of perceived unity in both Testaments combined can be described under the headings of promise—fulfilment, type—antitype, salvation history, a relationship with the living God, intertextuality and Christology. Some scholars point to narrower themes such as monotheism, God's covenant faithfulness, God's reign, righteousness, the covenants, election, grace and the response of obedience, the people of God, Exodus and new Exodus, creation and new creation or sin and salvation. Again, multiplex solutions have been proposed, for example, the existence of God, God as creator of a good world, the fall of humanity and the fact of election (Hanson and Harvey, in H. G. Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology in the Twentieth Century*, p. 159). P. Stuhlmacher (*How to Do Biblical Theology* [Allison Park, 1995], p. 63) offers an excellent narrative summary of the story of both Testaments: 'The one God who created the world and chose Israel to be his own people has through the sending, the work, and the death and resurrection of his only Son, Jesus Christ, sufficiently provided once and for all the salvation of Jews and Gentiles. Jesus Christ is the hope of all creation. Whoever believes in him as Reconciler and Lord and obeys his instruction may be certain of their participation in the kingdom of God.'

#### Evaluation

Clearly the OT is necessary to an understanding of the background and meaning of

both individual terms and broader concepts in the NT, not to mention the explicit quotations or allusions from the Old in the New. Conversely, for the Christian, the OT cannot be properly understood and applied without taking into account how NT revelation has or has not changed specific laws and principles from previous eras of salvation history. The broadest proposals for centres in each Testament, God and Jesus respectively, and a unifying theme for the entire Bible such as salvation history, best reflect the unity of the books. But one may ask how valuable this insight is, and whether such general themes significantly distinguish the canonical material from other Jewish and Christian literature of the time. Yet the narrower proposals all seem to exclude certain material within the canon or at least move certain books or portions of books to the periphery, if not to create an explicit canon within the canon, an approach methodologically inappropriate for those wishing to respect Scripture's own view of the inspiration and relevance of every section (e.g. 2 Tim. 3:16). Proposals combining several themes imply that the unity of Scripture may be likened to a picture album of a family over multiple generations — considerable diversity within a common gene pool (cf. R. L. Hubbard, Jr., 'Doing Old Testament theology today', in R. L. Hubbard, Jr., *et al.* (eds.), *Studies in Old Testament Theology* [Dallas and London, 1992], pp. 36-37). Clearly, there are 'family resemblances' (to use the language of Wittgenstein) among many of the proposed centres, despite there being no consensus on an exact theme or terminology.

Proposals like those of Lemcio or Stuhlmacher have the particular advantage of preserving *in nuce* the narrative form of the whole of Scripture. It is not often asked if it is necessary to reduce that which is couched in story form to a single theme or proposition. Perhaps it is more appropriate to consider how the story might be retold in its simplest form. Treating the Bible as narrative suggests a model for demonstrating in greater detail the unfolding unity and diversity within Scripture. One may summarize the plot line of the narrative literature, recognizing that other literary genres of Scripture are embedded in this larger 'historical' framework. Despite the diversity of Scripture, it is remarkable how if one follows the putative chronological se-

quence presented by the books themselves, each successive narrative consistently builds on antecedent Scripture in what seems to be a very conscious and straightforward fashion.

Stories typically lend themselves to the development of major themes through the eyes of their principal characters. Just as Jesus' parables consistently present a triadic model involving the interaction between a God-figure and contrasting subordinates, so one may posit a triangular structure for the whole narrative of Scripture, in which God in Christ relates to both his followers and his opponents. God's creative purposes, at first apparently thwarted, are followed by a plan of redemption and restoration which some people accept and others reject. The four major periods in this narrative are related to creation, the fall, redemption and the consummation of all God's purposes. Didactic material in the law, the prophets and the wisdom and epistolary literature describe how God's people should live within this broader historical framework.

#### The unifying plot of Scripture

##### The OT

The Bible begins with an account of creation and the primeval history of humanity (Gen. 1 — 11). In Genesis 12:1-3, God singles out the individual Abraham and promises him seed, land and a blessing for the nations. The rest of Genesis describes the obstacles to the immediate fulfilment of these promises and ends with Joseph and his brothers sojourning in Egypt. Exodus makes clear that God can deliver his people, but the golden calf (Exod. 32) and the wilderness wanderings (Num.) again delay God's blessing. Yet between Egypt and Canaan, God singles out the Israelites as his elect people and gives them the law in covenant form at Sinai, including promises and stipulations for their coming inheritance of the land (Exod. 20 — Lev. 27). Deuteronomy anticipates that inheritance by repeating and contextualizing the law, while Joshua describes the conquest, both books including covenant renewal ceremonies (Deut. 27 — 30; Josh. 5:2-12; 8:30-35).

But not all the nations are dispossessed. Hence Judges follows, with its 'Deuteronomistic' cycles of reward for blessing and punishment for disobedience. The book ends with God's people in near anarchy because

'Israel had no king' (Judg. 21:25). Samuel emerges as the first of the prophets and anoints the kings who will inaugurate the era of the monarchy. The books of Samuel and Kings narrate the rise and fall of that monarchy: the high point of Israel's enjoyment of its promised blessings; an extension of the covenant to include a Davidic dynasty (2 Sam. 7:14); and the downward spiral of disobedience during the period of the divided kingdom, with God's people finally taken away into exile.

Thus ends the first two of the four major sections of the OT according to the sequence of the Hebrew canon — the law (Gen. — Deut.) and the former prophets (Josh., Judg., 1 and 2 Sam., 1 and 2 Kgs.). Regardless of one's theory concerning the composition of these books, each successive narrative consciously builds on the previous one. The Pentateuch centres on God's promise of the land of Canaan to his people and culminates with their arrival on its borders. Yet Joshua, the first of the former prophets, follows so naturally from Deuteronomy that even critical scholars have spoken of a Hexateuch, uniting Joshua with the five books of the law. On the other hand, the theology of Deuteronomy so clearly pervades the former prophets that they have been linked by postulating a Deuteronomistic historian who wrote them all.

The third section of the Hebrew Scripture is the latter prophets (Is., Jer., Ezek. and 'the Twelve' [minor prophets]). These books supplement the 'primary history' of the first half of the OT. They can all be historically located within the chronological framework of the story of the divided kingdom, exile and restoration. References to prophets appear initially in the historical books (esp. important are Samuel, Nathan, Elijah and Elisha). These earlier, non-writing prophets resemble the later writing prophets in their powerful ministry of word and deed. Historical narrative (often parallel to antecedent Scripture — cf. esp. Jer. 52 and 2 Kgs. 25) is interspersed with prophetic oracles, suggesting that the latter prophets are consciously supplementing the stories that preceded them.

The prophetic rebukes of Israel are based on the Sinai covenant and especially criticize the Israelites' failure to respect the principles of social justice that permeate the Torah. Isaiah's suffering Servant passages develop the theme of sacrifice as necessary for forgiveness

of sins, so central in the book of Leviticus. The latter prophets' concern for the nations prepares the way for the universal spread of the Gospel. Despite the distinctives of each prophetic book, one finds again and again an announcement of the Israelites' sin and of impending judgment, coupled with the promise of later restoration and comfort and that they will again obey God's word.

The 'writings', the fourth section of the Hebrew canon, is the most amorphous, yet it clearly belongs in the 'family'. The Psalms formed Israel's worship book. Their contents and even their superscriptions demonstrate that many emerged as responses to specific historical contexts. Especially noteworthy are detailed recountings of God's past deeds, as described in the earlier narrative literature (e.g. Pss. 44, 68, 78, 89, 105, 106, 136). Psalm 119, by far the longest of the Psalms, is entirely a meditation on Torah. The Proverbs offer more generalized wisdom for all walks of life, but centre on the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7). Like the Psalms, they share key themes, especially about creation, which presuppose the teaching of the Pentateuch. Job in part forms a counterpoint to the rest of the canon in affirming suffering as a mystery locked in God's inscrutable sovereignty, which cannot be explained merely as a punishment for sin, as it is so often in the Deuteronomistic history. Nevertheless, the canonical framework in which Job's narrative is embedded (chs. 1 — 2; 42:7-17) meshes with the rest of the OT, with Job's ultimate material reward even in this life for his faithfulness against all odds.

The five scrolls ('Megilloth') comprise Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations and Esther. Ruth reflects God's care for Gentile women, yet is linked with the 'primary history' by Ruth's role as King David's ancestor. Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes are linked with King Solomon, whether or not he is the actual author of either work. As erotic love poetry, Song of Songs is unique in the canon, but it agrees with the rest in affirming the goodness of God's creation, even in its most material and earthy dimensions. Ecclesiastes, like Job, functions as 'protest literature', describing the insoluble mysteries of this transient life. But it too ultimately affirms enjoyment of God's good creation alongside fearing God and keeping the commandments (12:13). Lamen-

tations forms a fitting sequel to Jeremiah, bemoaning Israel in exile and Jerusalem in ruins. Esther too focuses on God's care for Jews in exile, through a Jewish queen in Persia, even though God never appears by name in the book.

The remaining writings are similarly disparate and yet are tied in with previous canonical literature. Daniel's ministry in Babylon recalls Joseph's role in Egypt and demonstrates the triumph of the kingdom of God over the kingdoms of this world, a formative theme for the NT as well. The Chronicler's work parallels that of the Deuteronomistic historian, but from a pro-Judah, pro-Davidic perspective. But it actually spans the whole period of history from creation to exile, after which comes the repatriation narrated in Ezra-Nehemiah. There are enough links between Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah to suggest to some common authorship. Interestingly, in the Hebrew Scriptures, Chronicles comes last, after Ezra-Nehemiah, as if to close the canon with its review of names and events from Adam onwards.

In numerous ways the OT remains self-consciously open-ended. The manifold promise of Genesis 12, elaborated in Exodus 5 — 6, supplemented by the law, transformed by the monarchy of Samuel/Kings, to be fulfilled in the coming Day of the Lord as predicted by the prophets, has not been fully consummated, certainly not in perpetuity. Thus Malachi (3 — 4) looks forward to a coming purification of the temple by the Lord himself, Jeremiah (31) to a new covenant with God's people, Ezekiel (36) to a new heart and spirit in Israel, Joel (2) to a new age in which the Holy Spirit is poured out upon all God's people indiscriminately and Isaiah (e.g. 2; 25; 65 — 66) to a glorious material world, an eschatological banquet and ultimately new heavens and a new earth. All this is clear, even apart from specific texts whose interpretation is disputed but which are taken in the NT as Messianic prophecies (e.g. Pss. 2; 16; 22; 45; Is. 7:14; 9:6; Mic. 5:2). And the end of the historical narrative finds Israel, while restored to her land, still subject to foreign nations and with a rebuilt temple whose grandeur pales in comparison with the temple of King Solomon (Hag. 2:3).

#### The NT

Neither the intertestamental period nor the

rabbinic era saw any greater fulfilment of these OT promises, though the century of liberation inaugurated by the Maccabees (167-63 BC) certainly raised Israel's hopes and rekindled Messianic fervour. Many of the details of OT prophecy are not literally fulfilled in NT events either, but there is reason to think that God intended the age of Jesus and the apostles to inaugurate their fulfilment. Some OT promises may have been forfeited through Israel's disobedience; others were meant to be interpreted spiritually; and the fulfilment of still others is postponed until Christ's return. No one could have deduced the NT from the Old or created all of its detail out of the Old. Yet the lines of correspondence are clear and impressive (H. H. Rowley, *The Unity of the Bible*, pp. 99-100).

Jesus came announcing the arrival of the kingdom of God. God would again rule over his people. By choosing twelve apostles, Christ was forming the nucleus of a new or true Israel. His teaching fulfilled the law, even while reinterpreting and transcending it (Matt 5:17; Luke 24:44). His ethic centred on love, in clear continuity with the OT's double love-command for God and neighbour (Matt. 22:34-40; cf. Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18). His miracles demonstrated the presence of God's reign. His passion and death typologically fulfilled various passages in the Psalms and Prophets and more straightforwardly fitted the model of Isaiah's suffering servant (Is. 52:13 — 53:12). His resurrection is seen as the beginning of the general resurrection, already anticipated in Daniel 12:2. N. T. Wright (*Jesus and the Victory of God* [London and Minneapolis, 1996]) helpfully sums up Jesus' message as the announcement of the end of exile, despite the presence of Roman troops. The true enemy is Satan, not Rome, and the central element of liberation is the forgiveness of sins, not political independence. And all four Gospels agree that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of Man, the Son of God and the Lord.

The book of Acts is the only other historical narrative in the NT, carrying forward the story of the community Jesus established. It is an account of the transformation of a uniquely Jewish sect into a significant worldwide religion, in fulfilment of God's promise that Abraham's seed would be a blessing to all the nations of the earth.

The epistles comprise apostolic instruction

for that ever-expanding community in diverse settings and circumstances. At first glance Paul seems to present a quite different message from that of Jesus, but they agree that Christianity is the fulfilment of Israel and that people are made right with God by faith in Christ, not by works of the law. Paul's infrequent references to the details of Jesus' life are balanced by his frequent allusions to his teaching. In writing to Christian individuals and churches, Paul presupposes knowledge of the Christian kerygma and builds on it. One may trace distinct theological trajectories across the spectrum of Judaism to Hellenism in Hebrews and the 'Catholic Epistles' (Jas.; 1 and 2 Pet.; 1, 2 and 3 John; Jude) but they are united to the kerygma by their core Christology (e.g. Heb. 1:1-4; 1 Pet. 2:21-25; 1 John 4:1-3). James is perhaps the most distinct of these letters, but it resembles the wisdom literature of Proverbs and frequently echoes Jesus' ethical instruction. And all the epistles fit into the broader historical narrative of Jesus and the churches that his followers created in the 1st century.

It is appropriate for both the NT and the Scriptures as a whole to end with the Apocalypse, prophesying the complete fulfilment of all the Bible's predictions, and full of allusions to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Revelation's final chapters expand upon Isaiah's new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21 — 22), and form an inclusio with Genesis 1 — 2, with frequent parallels between the original creation and the new creation.

All in all, the Old and New Testaments together provide a remarkably unified story-line considering the diverse authors, audiences and circumstances of their various books. In no other literature besides the Bible do some forty authors or editors, writing in a period of over a thousand years, in places and cultures as widely separated as Rome and Babylon, succeed in developing a body of literature that even at a first inspection gives an indication of being a unity' (D. P. Fuller, 'The Importance of the Unity of the Bible', p. 65).

#### The diversity of Scripture

In the midst of Scripture's unity, we must not lose sight of its diversity (cf. esp. J. Goldingay, 'Diversity and Unity in Old Testament Theology', and J. D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*). This takes several forms. The books of the Bible are

written by different authors, in different times and places, to different audiences in distinct circumstances, using various literary genres. Each book thus displays unique purposes and themes. In some instances, different portions of Scripture are so closely parallel that we can postulate a literary relationship between them and assume that their differences are intentional: sometimes theologically motivated; sometimes merely for stylistic variation. Deuteronomy consciously updates various laws of Exodus and Leviticus for more settled life in the Promised Land. Chronicles retells significant portions of the Deuteronomistic history, adding, omitting and rewording to highlight its focus on the southern kingdom, its kings, the temple and the priestly service. Each of the four Gospels clearly has its own slant on the identity of Jesus and the nature of his ministry, while 2 Peter seems to have revised and supplemented Jude to combat a new group of false teachers in a new context.

It is important, therefore, to understand each biblical author or book in its own right. Identical words may be used differently by different writers in different contexts. Luke, for example, regularly uses 'apostle' to refer to one of the Twelve, whereas Paul uses it for a variety of individuals, including himself, who function as early Christian missionaries. He reflects the etymology of *apostolos*: 'someone sent on a mission'. The famous 'contradiction' between Paul and James is resolved once one understands that the authors use the key terms 'faith', 'works' and 'justify' in somewhat different ways.

Diversity may emerge within a given book of Scripture as well. Joshua 11:23 narrates how the Israelites 'took the entire land', whereas 13:1 observes that much of the land remained to be taken. These seemingly conflicting statements are better explained as complementary perspectives on one underlying reality. The Israelites had indeed dispossessed their neighbours of a substantial portion of Canaan (ch. 12), but their failure to follow up their victories kept them from conquering it all (13:3-6). J. G. McConville ('Using Scripture for theology') finds two kinds of unity and diversity within the OT, which might also be found in the NT. First, there are divergent but complementary data that may be combined into a larger, more complex whole. Here Scripture is prescriptive. Second, there are genuinely conflicting data

that reflect specific teaching for specific circumstances in biblical history. These obviously cannot all be equally normative in the same way at the same time, but sometimes function prescriptively in parallel contexts today, while at other times remaining merely descriptive.

The key to a proper appreciation of the diversity in biblical theology, therefore, is to interpret each book as a literary integrity in its own right, in the light of the unique circumstances and purposes that generated it, and of antecedent Scripture and other relevant historical background. On the other hand, the pervasive unity of Scripture means that if the resulting interpretations of two different passages or writers produce an irreconcilable contradiction, it is legitimate to ask if one has interpreted both correctly. That Jews and Christians have historically believed that no Scripture, properly interpreted, contradicts another, means that one should exhaust all reasonable options for harmonizing texts before announcing the discovery of an insoluble problem.

#### *Illustrations of diversity*

One of the most important kinds of diversity among the books of the Bible is their distinctive themes. Among the minor prophets, Amos highlights social justice; Joel, the coming day of the Lord; Haggai, the rebuilding of the temple; and Habakkuk, the problem of evil. In the Gospels, Matthew presents Jesus as the Son of David; Mark, the Christ incognito; Luke, the Saviour of all humanity; and John, the Logos, Lamb and God incarnate. In the Pentateuch, Genesis focuses particularly on God's promise to bless the nations through the seed of Abraham; Exodus on God's presence; Leviticus on sacrifice and holiness; Numbers on national failure; and Deuteronomy on the re-establishment of the covenant. Among Paul's epistles, Galatians emphasizes Christian freedom; Ephesians, the unity of the church; Philippians, rejoicing in all circumstances; and the Pastoral Epistles, church order.

There are also diverse genres, subgenres and literary forms. 1 Thessalonians is a letter of exhortation; 2 Corinthians, an epistle of apostolic self-commendation; Philippians, a family letter of friendship. Within a Gospel one finds parables, miracles, proverbs and pronouncement stories; in the Psalter, psalms

of praise, lament, imprecation and prayer for deliverance. And all Scripture may be subdivided into prose and poetry.

#### *Harmonization of diversity*

Harmonizing apparently discrepant texts is a legitimate technique which most historians, ancient and modern, utilize. The fact that the church has at times proposed implausible harmonizations of Scripture does not invalidate the method. Interpreters of ancient texts must plead a cautious agnosticism if a majority of data falls together into a harmonious whole, but a minority seems at first glance not to do so. It is legitimate to leave certain questions open, particularly in the light of the vast amount of information about the ancient world which is simply unknown.

Many of the most plausible harmonizations of texts are not strictly additive; that is, they do not claim that two apparently discrepant statements are both part of a larger whole. Apparent contradictions may be due to a corrupt text, to a misunderstanding of unusual or literary forms or to a lack of historical or chronological precision among ancient writers. Apparent 'doublets' may reflect similar but distinct incidents. Rugged 'seams' may stem from divergent sources woven together somewhat loosely. Understanding the theological or redactional distinctives of a given writer may resolve other problems (For examples of all these types of harmonization, with reference to the OT, the NT and other ancient texts, see C. L. Blomberg, 'The legitimacy and limits of harmonization'.)

#### *'Development' as a source of diversity*

God's progressive revelation allows for development in Scripture in numerous ways. An excellent example is the OT's progressive understanding of an afterlife. Initially Sheol seems little more than the grave or a very shadowy existence beyond. But by Daniel 12, resurrection of both just and unjust is articulated, and the NT even more clearly delineates the nature and occupants of heaven and hell. Or again, God may act differently in different ages. In the OT, his Holy Spirit comes temporarily on special people for special acts of power. After Pentecost the Spirit permanently indwells all Christians (Rom. 8:9).

Less plausible theories of development in-

clude those that require the rearrangement of biblical chronology or the disregard of significant scriptural data: for example, the view that Israel evolved from a polytheistic to a monotheistic religion, or the idea that an older priestly emphasis on ritual was later supplanted by a prophetic stress on morality (*cf.* instead the mixture of holiness laws in Lev. 19 and contrast Ps. 51:16 with 19). Similarly, in the NT, theories of developing Christology must come to grips with Jesus' self-understanding and the high Christology of the early chapters of Acts and the pre-Pauline creeds. Theories of a developing institutionalization in ecclesiology must account for Matthew 18:15-20 on church discipline, 1 Corinthians 14 on the orderly use of *charismata* and the church officers of Philippians 1:1.

One must approach even more cautiously theories of theological development within one given writer over a very short period of time. It is not likely, for example, that Paul first thought he would live to see the parousia (1 Thess. 4:15, AD 50) but later changed his mind (Phil. 1:23, AD 62). In no passage of Paul's does he claim to know for certain that he will live until Christ's return (or that he will not). Where development clearly does appear in Scripture, it is better to speak of evolution than of revolution, of organic development than of mutation or distortion, or of the unity one finds in a robe with many fibres, not all of which extend the length of the twine, but each of which grows out of and is tied into a previous strand (I. H. Marshall, 'Climbing ropes, ellipses and symphonies: The relation between biblical and systematic theology', in P. E. Satterthwaite and D. F. Wright [eds.], *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture* [Grand Rapids, 1994], pp. 208-211).

#### Conclusion

In short, the unity and diversity of Scripture must be acknowledged and held in a delicate balance. More liberal scholarship tends to focus so much on diversity that the unity disappears. More conservative scholarship tends to focus so much on unity that the diversity disappears. Without a recognition of the unity of Scripture, the canon in its entirety cannot function as the authoritative foundation for Christian belief and practice as historically it has done. Without an appreciation of the diversity that comes from hearing each text,

book and author on its own terms, one risks misinterpreting Scripture and not discerning what God intended to say to his people at any given point in their history. Theologically, the unity of Scripture marks out clear limits of thought and behaviour beyond which individuals or 'churches' may not legitimately be called Christian. On the other hand, the diversity of Scripture demonstrates how no one sect or ecclesiastical tradition has a monopoly of the truth. One can become heretical by being either too broad-minded or too narrow-minded!

*See also:* CHALLENGES TO BIBLICAL THEOLOGY; RELATIONSHIP OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT.

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## New Testament Use of the Old Testament

### Introduction

It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of the function and influence of the OT in the NT. There are quotations of or allusions to the OT in every NT writing except Philemon and 2 and 3 John. It is quoted with introductory formulas ('it is written') and without

Paraphrases and allusions appear; sometimes the allusions comprise no more than a word or two. In other places the NT reflects OT themes, structures and theology. The NT writers appeal to the OT for apologetic, moral, doctrinal and liturgical reasons. The evangelists seek in various ways to show how Jesus understood Scripture, fulfilled Scripture,

and was clarified by Scripture. The OT is represented even more prominently in the writings of Paul and in Hebrews.

Of more importance than its use in the NT is the theology of the OT. The OT's view of God, of humanity, of covenant, of the election of Israel and of judgment forms the presupposition that underlies the theology of Jesus, his disciples, and the writings of the NT. Apart from the OT the NT would make little sense. Explicit quotations of the OT, as well as the numerous allusions, provide only a partial indication of the foundational function the OT plays in the theology of the NT. Careful consideration of the function of the OT clarifies at many significant points the foundational doctrines of the NT.

### Functions of the OT

The OT is quoted with introductory formulas (e.g. 'in order that it be fulfilled'), and sometimes without; many paraphrases and allusions are made through the use of a few key words or phrases. With regard to exegetical style, scholars have pointed to possible parallels with *pesher* as practised at Qumran (esp. in Matthew, Paul and Hebrews) and parallels with rabbinic midrash (esp. in John and Paul). The OT seems to have three principal functions: 1. legal, 2. prophetic and 3. analogical. Legal interpretation has to do with determining what is required of the one who has faith in God (or in Jesus). Prophetic interpretation has to do with what has been fulfilled in Jesus' advent and what is expected to be fulfilled in the future. Analogical interpretation has to do with comparisons. Typology is a familiar form of analogical interpretation. Several examples of these principal functions are considered in the following sections.

### Jesus and the Gospels

Jesus' use of the Scripture is at points similar to its use by the rabbis of his day. Therefore much of his teaching and use of the OT is familiar to his hearers. However, the eschatological orientation of Jesus' interpretation of Scripture parallels more closely scriptural interpretation at Qumran, while its pneumatic emphasis reflects Jesus' own experience of the Spirit in his life and ministry. Thus Jesus' understanding of the OT often struck familiar chords, which attracted hearers, and yet his understanding was at points distinctive and

unexpected, which challenged his hearers, including his closest followers.

Citations of the OT in the Gospels reflect the Hebrew (Matt. 11:10, 29; Mark 10:19; 12:30; Luke 22:37), the Greek (Matt. 18:16; 21:16; Mark 7:6-7; 10:8; Luke 4:18; 23:46; John 12:38), and the Aramaic (Matt. 4:10; Mark 4:12; 9:48) versions. Given the nature and origin of the material, the respective contexts of the evangelists, and the fact that they wrote their Gospels in Greek, such diversity is hardly surprising. But citations attributed to Jesus also reflect the same diversity. Since Jesus probably did not speak Greek, he probably did not quote the Greek version (Lxx). But the Greek citations are not necessarily inauthentic, that is, deriving from the Greek-speaking Church after the time of Jesus. In many cases Jesus' citations of Scripture have been assimilated to the wording of the Greek, especially when the point that he makes is not lost in such assimilation.

### Legal interpretation of Scripture

In most respects Jesus' view of the legal portions of Scripture was essentially that of his Palestinian contemporaries. When tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13), Jesus responded with appropriate citations from Deuteronomy 8:3 ('Man shall not live by bread alone'), 6:16 ('You shall not tempt the Lord your God'), and 6:13 ('You shall worship the Lord your God', RSV). When asked what the greatest commandment was, Jesus cited Deuteronomy 6:4-5 ('Hear O Israel... love the Lord your God with your whole heart...'; cf. Mark 12:29-30) and Leviticus 19:18 ('You shall love your neighbour as yourself'; cf. Mark 12:31). Deuteronomy 6:4-5 was part of the Shema that an observant Jew was to recite twice daily (cf. *Mishnah Berakot* 1:1-4). The idea of loving one's neighbour as oneself and so fulfilling the whole law is found in Jewish sources: 'This [Lev. 19:18] is a great principle in the Torah' (*Sipra Leviticus* on Lev. 19:18; cf. *Genesis Rabbah* 24.7 [on Gen. 5:1]). There is probably an allusion to the two commandments in combination in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*: 'Each of you speaks the truth clearly to his neighbour... Throughout all your life love the Lord and one another with a true heart' (*Testament of Dan* 5:2-3); 'Love the Lord and the neighbour' (*Testament of Issachar* 7:6); they are also