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WHO IS THE KING OF GLORY?
THE JOINT USE OF TYPOLOGICAL AND PROSOPOLOGICAL EXEGESIS TO IDENTIFY FIGURES AND EVENTS IN SELECT ESCHATOLOGICAL PSALMS

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Introduction

THIS PAPER AIMS to demonstrate the usefulness of typological and prosopological exegesis as contemporary methodologies for interpreting the texts of the Old Testament by applying them to a select group of similarly themed psalms. I contend that typological and prosopological exegesis, when applied together as compatible and complementary methodologies, reveal Psalms 2, 24, and 110 to depict the enthronement, reign, and arrival of the messianic king. Put in explicitly Christian terms, these psalms depict the ascension, session, and parousia of Jesus.

I will begin by explaining common definitions for typological and prosopological exegesis, as well as proposing some slight modifications to them. Next, I will show how the two approaches to reading biblical texts harmonize into a unified methodology. I will then briefly supply the theological and hermeneutical foundations for my proposed methodology. Finally, having laid down the necessary prolegomena, I will apply the methodology to Psalms 2, 24, and 110 in order to draw out the full meaning present within the eschatological portrait I believe those psalms, taken as a whole, depict.

Hermeneutics and Definitions

Prosopological Exegesis

Most discussions of prosopological exegesis have been historically focused and descriptive in orientation.[1] That is, these studies seek to expound what Christians did,

1. See especially the groundbreaking studies by Matthew Bates and Madison Pierce. Matthew W. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (TX: Baylor UP, 2012). Madison N. Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the*

not so much what Christians should do now, let alone how and why they should go about doing it. Thus, the definitions and categories associated with prosopological exegesis have often been too narrow and insufficiently defined for the methodology to be pressed into contemporary service. One contribution this paper can make along the way, as I seek to apply prosopological exegesis to eschatological Old Testament passages, is to hammer out and further clarify relevant definitions. This is not a distraction from the topic at hand but a necessary pit stop.

Prosopological exegesis, commonly defined, is a methodology that identifies ambiguous persons (πρόσωπα) within Old Testament texts in such a way that the reader draws out theologically significant latent meaning.[2] The adjective "significant" here means more than parsing out mere grammatical ambiguities.[3] For example, the pericope of Exodus 4:24–26 is notorious for its ambiguous pronouns. In it, Zipporah, in order to placate the Angel of Yahweh, circumcises her son Gershom in the wilderness while Moses sleeps. She throws the bloody foreskin at someone's feet, but whose feet they are is unclear from the text. Working through such a textual difficulty is *not* prosopological exegesis.[4] A different ambiguity occurs in Genesis 19:24, part of the Sodom and Gomorrah pericope. In this text, "Yahweh rains on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from Yahweh out of heaven." Here, it seems, especially in light of the context,[5] that the author is describing two Yahwehs: one on earth and one

Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations of Scripture (New York: Cambridge UP, 2020). The discussion of prosopological exegesis by Craig Carter, however, is oriented in a prescriptive direction. See Craig A. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 191–223. For a modern example of prosopological exegesis, as I define it, being practiced by someone (perhaps without being aware of the category), see E. Ray Clendenen, "'Messenger of the Covenant' in Malachi 3:1 Once Again," *JETS* 62.1 (2019): 81–102. Although the author never uses the term "prosopological," unraveling ambiguities within Malachi's text in light of New Testament revelation is the basis for his argument. His article is a helpful illustration of the method I will be advocating here.

2. See, for example, the definition given by Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 183.

3. Bates uses the term "nontrivial." See Bates, *Hermeneutics,* 219. Pierce says, "The prosopological exegesis must identify an unspecified participant of the base text in a way that is not obviously indicated by a plain reading." See Pierce, *Divine Discourse*, 21.

4. It could become an example of Prosopological exegesis if one were to use NT Trinitarian revelation to identify the angel of Yahweh; however, simple grammatical ambiguities do not count. Christian interpreters may be tempted to read the trinity into grammatical shifts where Yahweh switches to third person speech (illeism). This approach is suspect and should be avoided by practitioners of prosopological exegesis. See Andrew S. Malone, "God the Illeist: Third Person Self-References and Trinitarian Hints in the Old Testament," *JETS* 52.3 (2009): 499–518. Malone includes Genesis 19:24 as an example of illeism, but I would argue the presence of a theophany sets it apart.

5. In the immediately preceding chapter, the Angel of Yahweh is manifest on earth in the presence of two angels. This theophany speaks to, eats meat with, and walks with Abraham. The context is very clear that Yahweh is in some way visibly and specially present in a particular location on earth at that time. The chapter ends with the Angel of Yahweh leaving Abraham. He does not, however, ascend to heaven like in the story of Manoah and his wife (Judg. 13:20);

in heaven. Prosopological exegesis recognizes the ambiguity,[6] affirms that there are indeed two Yahwehs, and maps onto the text the New Testament revelation of the Father, God invisible, and the Son, God revealed.[7] Thus, a prosopological reading of

rather the Angel of Yahweh merely walks away (וַיֵּלֶךְ יְהוָה). This leaves the reader with the natural assumption that the Angel of Yahweh is still present on earth. Madison Pierce discusses the interpretation of this text briefly as an example of prosopological exegesis. See Pierce, *Divine Discourse*, 156.

6. In a recent article William James Dernell helpfully distinguishes between two types of prosopological exegesis, which he labels PE1 and PE2. PE1 identifies figures that are truly ambiguous (e.g., the servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 53 or the Lord in Psalm 110). Dernell describes PE1 as "a product of plain reading or *sensus literalis*" (138). PE2, however, involves texts that do not seem to have ambiguous referents (e.g., the speaker of Psalm 16). Dernell argues that the methodology behind PE2 is suspect. While I am mostly on board with Dernell's criticisms of PE2, I am not ready to jettison the category and terminology. For the most part, the examples of prosopological exegesis in this paper would qualify as PE1. See later notes for my interaction with and discussion of PE2. It does have *some* relevance for the present paper. William James Dernell, "Typology, Christology and Prosopological Exegesis: Implicit Narratives in Christological Texts," *SBJT* 24.1 (2020): 137–61.

It is also worth noting at this point that some examples of PE1 seem to be triggered by substantial textual difficulties (e.g., the two Yahwehs in Gen. 19:24 or the messengers in Mal. 3:1; cf. my readings of Pss. 24:7–10 and 110:1, 5 below). In such texts, both the *existence* and the *identity* of the figure (πρόσωπον) are ambiguous. E.g., Is there merely one Yahweh, or does the text indicate two? Who is the second? Other examples of PE1 simply stem from the description of either of a figure who is mysterious or one who is more fully understandable in light of NT revelation. Such texts would include the Servant Songs of Isaiah or the Son of Man text in Daniel 7. In these cases, merely the *identity* of the figure is ambiguous. *E.g., No one doubts that the prophets Isaiah and Daniel had someone—either an individual or corporate figure—in view when describing the Servant and Son of Man. The question is simply, "Who is he?"*

7. My terminology of "two Yahwehs" in no way should be read as contradicting the ὁμοούσιον. Fred Sanders, following Augustine, argues against Christophanies out of concern for "naïve subordinationism" (because they would violate inseparable operations) and a facile approach to divine invisibility. Regarding the charge of subordinationism, I adopt his suggestion that "the special anthropomorphic theophanies of the Old Testament must mean, but not be, the Son. That is, as we saw with the dove and the voice at Christ's baptism, a created manifestation signifying the divine presence is the work of the entire Trinity together rather than one particular person of the Trinity. But it may signify the presence of one particular person of the Trinity" (226). I also concede Sanders's objection that the Son is no less invisible ontologically than the Father. However, as Sanders's admits, "the Son, based on his inner-Trinitarian status as the one who is eternally from the Father and expresses the Father, might be the appropriate messenger of God even in the Old Covenant" (225). Thus, my use of such terminology is economic and phenomenological, not ontological. I am borrowing the terminology of visible/invisible from Michael Heiser. See his book and article I cite below in later notes. Sanders also expresses concern that Christophanies might undermine the uniqueness of the incarnation. This, however, is a weak objection. The Christophanies I propose are temporary created phenomena, as opposed to the permanent hypostatic union. Moreover, the Spirit explicitly rushes upon individuals in the OT (e.g., Judges 14:6). If this does not violate the uniqueness of the Spirit's descent at Pentecost, then Christophanies do not violate the uniqueness of the incarnation.

Genesis 19:24 identifies ambiguous persons in a theologically significant way because it draws out latent meaning (God's triunity even in the Old Testament) and clarifies it in light of newer revelation.

Additionally, interpreters should note that the persons identified in the source texts by prosopological exegesis can be the speakers, the addressees, or the subjects.[8] In other words, the methodology comprises all three grammatical persons: I, you, and he/she.[9] Furthermore, prosopological exegesis can be used on a variety of Old Testament genres. As noted above with Genesis 19:24, prose narrative can be read prosopologically. Frequently, however, interpreters apply the methodology to poetic texts, especially the Psalms. As a genre, poetry naturally lends itself to the ambiguity clarified by prosopological exegesis.

Moreover, the Psalms are often intentionally ambiguous about their speakers, addressees, and subjects precisely because they are the Psalms: a hymnbook meant to be sung by a diverse array of people at a wide variety of times.[10] Prophetic texts,

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Sanders's discussion of Christophanies occurs on 224–6 of *The Triune God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016). Sanders does endorse trinitarian prosopological readings of the Psalms on 226–35.

For a book that similarly argues against Christophanies while upholding the divinity of the Angel of Yahweh, see Andrew Malone, *Knowing Jesus in the Old Testament?: A Fresh Look at Christophanies* (Nottingham, UK: IVP, 2015). For responses responding directly to Malone's book that are also favorable to Christophanies, see Richard P. Belcher Jr., Review of *Knowing Jesus in the Old Testament?: A Fresh Look at Christophanies*, by Andrew Malone, *Reformed Theological Review* 75.3 (2016): 209–11; Matt Foreman & Doug Van Dorn, "Appendix III: Review of *Knowing Jesus in the OT*" in *The Angel of the Lord: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Study* (Dacono, CO: Waters of Creation Publishing, 2020), 344–54. For a classic evangelical book that argues for Christophanies, see James A. Borland, *Christ in the Old Testament: Old Testament Appearances of Christ in Human Form* (Fearn, UK: Mentor, 2010).

8. In my experience, the second category and especially the third category are frequently forgotten in discussions of prosopological exegesis. Care should be taken by inquirers into this field not to omit these. Bates lists speakers and addressees in his definition (see Bates, *Hermeneutics* 183, 217), but Pierce includes all three (*Divine Discourse*, 21). Regardless of how contemporary scholars define the categories, the definition of prosopological exegesis clearly, in my mind, should include subjects (i.e., third person speech) as well because what would one do with Genesis 19:24 or Isaiah 53 otherwise? For example, Seth Ehorn describes Paul's use of Psalm 68 in Ephesians 4 as prosopological exegesis even though the base text is in the third person, so, in practice at least, scholarship backs up this point. Seth M. Ehorn, "The Citation of Psalm 68(67).19 in Ephesians 4.8 within the Context of Early Christian Uses of the Psalms" (PhD. Diss., University of Edinburgh, New College, 2014). Michael Slusser categorizes patristic readings of Genesis 19:24 as prosopological. See "The Exegetical Roots of Trinitarian Theology," *Theological* Studies 49 (1988): 461–76. Additionally, as one reads patristic literature, authors cite within the same thought third person texts (e.g., Gen. 19:24) and second person texts (Ps. 2:7). Ancient authors certainly seem to group these readings in the same category.

9. Potentially identifiable figures include eschatological figures (e.g., John the Baptist, Mary, the apostles, the antichrist) and heavenly figures (e.g., persons of the Trinity and angels or other semi-divine creatures).

10. See my suggestion below that some texts may genuinely have two real, simultaneous speakers, addressees, or subjects.

likewise, are commonly read prosopologically. This association makes sense, given the inherently visionary nature of prosopological exegesis. Craig Carter states, "These prophets, such as David and Isaiah, were enabled to overhear conversations between God the Father and God the Son."[11] Likewise, Matthew Bates states, "For the first Christians these prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, David, and others—were in fact able to climb through a divinely ordained tear between heaven and earth, in order to overhear and report certain celestial conversations."[12] Prophetic texts, along with some eschatologically oriented psalms, are the places in Scripture where the veil between this world and heaven is the thinnest.

Before moving forward, it is important to note the difference between my definition of prosopological exegesis and that of its chief proponent, Matthew Bates. I believe his approach requires adjustment. A subtle but vital flaw in Bates's work is that he uses the categories of *theodramatic reading* and *prosopological exegesis* as functionally synonymous, even while technically (though usually not explicitly) distinguishing them. Bates acknowledges this issue, writing,

> In addition to taking on a prosopon, for early Christian readers, seemingly, the prophet could also watch a theodramatic scene as an external observer, not entering into the speaking role himself, but nonetheless observing and overhearing the prosopa as they perform. Thus, to be precise, although I often use the terms interchangeably, I consider theodramatic interpretation a larger category in which an ancient reader invokes an assumed theodrama as an explanation of the text, and prosopological exegesis to be a subset of it, in which the interpreter believes the prophet has entered into a character-role and is speaking or being addressed as that person. Most of my interest in this book is prosopological exegesis in the early church rather than theodramatic interpretation more generally, although I hope that in time others will join me in exploring more fully both the former and the latter in the New Testament and beyond.[13]

The unfortunate result of Bates's failure to clearly distinguish the two categories is, I believe, a broad misunderstanding. As noted previously, in my academic experience, I have encountered scholars who, armed with a merely cursory understanding of Bates's work, assume the *entirety* of his hermeneutical theory involves prophets taking on 2nd person personas in order to preform theodramatic speeches. In other words, because Bates rarely distinguishes the two categories with clarity and because he focuses so heavily on prosopological exegesis, some scholars have failed to recognize that prosopological exegesis is *merely* a subset of a broader reading strategy. Moreover, with regard to 2nd person speech, Bates pushes the role-playing element too hard. In some cases (e.g., the Servant Songs in Isaiah 50 and 61), this may be an accurate description of the phenomenon; however, in other instances

11. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture*, 193.

12. Matthew W. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford, UK: Oxford UP, 2015), 5.

13. Bates, *Birth of the Trinity, 35.*

(e.g., Psalms 2 and 110), it seems better to view 2nd person speech as merely the record of a prophet's visionary account. The prophet need not be taking on some alternate persona. Because of these issues, the reading strategy Bates proposes sometimes seems more idiosyncratic and unnatural than it actually is in substance. The confusion has meant others have not joined him in "exploring more fully [theodramatic interpretation] in the New Testament and beyond." By explicitly broadening the definition of prosopological exegesis to be coterminous with theodramatic reading, I hope to readjust the scholarly focus off the subcategories of 2nd person speech and assumed personas and onto the broader category of identification of ambiguous persons or figures.[14]

Typological Exegesis

Unlike prosopological exegesis, typology is a far more familiar category; however, its definition is likewise contentious. Typological exegesis notes patterns, usually in the form of persons, institutions, and events, that repeat and escalate along the outworking of redemptive-history's covenantal progression.[15] Such patterns appear in earlier Scripture and correspond to events, persons, and institutions in later Scripture. These patterns are prospective in their intention[16] by the authors of Scripture, not retrospective (at least not primarily).[17] In other words, authors of earlier Scripture

14. Some might be tempted to respond that the term "prosopological" is dependent on the dramatic assumption of another's persona; however, the πρόσωπα could just as well be understood as persons in general. Note Bates's equivocation in the quote above, "In addition to taking on a prosopon [theodramatic character role] . . . the prophet could also watch . . . the prosopa [individuals/persons] as they perform."

Additionally, as noted previously, I believe other scholars such as Pierce, Carter, and Slusser offer a broader definition of prosopological exegesis that closely fits my approach.

15. This is a common definition that can be found in many works. See for example, G. K. Beale, *Handbook of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 14.

16. Typological correspondences should be demonstrably intentional on the part of the author. In other words, they need to have a baseline defensibility. Often typology (intentional and contextual) has been distinguished from allegory (contrived and a-contextual). Some in the Evangelical camp are pushing back against such a distinction. See Carter, *Interpreting Scripture*, 98–100. See also, Carter's comments in Brian J. Tabb and Andrew M. King, eds., *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2022), 257. Additionally, see Ephraim Radner, *Time and the Word: Figural Reading of the Christian Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016). My view aligns with Carter that the spiritual (in this case, typological sense) should be an extension, but never contradiction, of the single literal sense of the text. See Carters points in Tabb, *Five Views*, 244, 251–6.

Moreover, we can further distinguish typological exegesis from instances where readers of Scripture draw on biblical imagery to illustrate a point unrelated to the biblical text. Such instances of idiomatic usage of biblical language abound.

17. I am open to some instances of typological correspondence being retrospective. John's description of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well is clearly intended by the human author to call attention to the patriarchs and Moses. Perhaps that retrospective move is more

intended the details of their writings to point forward toward some fulfillment and escalation in later redemptive-history. Later authors of Scripture were not merely looking back to early Scripture for figures and images that would help them communicate their contemporary theological points.[18]

An excellent example of typology in action is the mountain theme readers of Scripture can trace alongside the Bible's covenantal progression.[19] God's covenant with Adam centers on Eden (identified as a mountain in Ezek. 28:13–14; cf. Gen. 2:10[20]). God's covenant with Israel centers on Sinai and then on Zion. The New Covenant, according to Hebrews 12, centers on the heavenly Mount Zion. Furthermore, the mountain theme is linked with other themes, such as son of God and covenant mediator (Adam, Moses/Aaron/David, Jesus). These themes form a God-intended web that unites the narrative of Scripture, deepens with significance as the story progresses, and points the reader toward Christ, the climax of revelation.

One critique of evangelical views of typology will be helpful before progressing. Some want to make *human* authorial intent essential to the definition of typology. A key exponent of this position is James Hamilton. He states, "The most important criterion for determining what a text means is determining the intent of its human author,"[21] and "God ordained that the parallels would actually happen, and he providentially ensured that the biblical authors would notice them."[22] Because Scripture is the product of both a divine and a human author, I believe such a

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significant than any prospective move by the divine author of the Pentateuchal well narratives to call attention to Jesus.

The two options do not have to be mutually exclusive. The human author of later Scripture can retrospectively recognize the typology intended prospectively by the divine author of previous scripture. The human author of later Scripture can then literarily shape his account to draw out the typological correspondence more clearly. Such instances of typology could then be both retrospective and prospective. My concern is to avoid the naturalistic denial of prospective typology.

Some typology on the part of the divine author may be exclusively retrospective as well. Consider 2 Peter's patterning of Jesus according to 1 Enoch's Book of the Watchers. Since 1 Enoch is not inspired, I cannot say that the typology is prospective.

18. For an example of someone who does treat typology retrospectively the way I am rejecting, see John Goldingay's position in Tabb, *Five Views*, 31.

19. Two works that trace this theme particularly well are G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004) and Meredith G. Kline, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006). This theme will become important in my exposition of Psalm 24.

20. Rivers flow from high elevation to low elevation; thus, it seems implied in Genesis that Eden was a mountain.

21. James M. Hamilton Jr., *Typology: Understanding the Bible's Promise-Shaped Patterns* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2022), 18.

22. Hamilton, *Typology*, 26. I think we often underestimate the frequency and extent to which human authors noticed the divinely ordained patterns; however, I also think we should not make their noticing a requirement for typology.

requirement is artificially narrow and unhelpfully restrictive.[23] Why should human and divine authorial intent be coterminous? If the two are non-competitive, as they are in God's providential governance of history, then why could God not intend more than the human author, just as he does in his providence?[24]

Moreover, it seems evident that he does. As Craig Carter points out, do we really want to say that the author of Leviticus always consciously intended the cultic regulations to point to the Messiah?[25] Such a position seems difficult to defend, yet the cultic regulations manifestly do prefigure the cross.[26] Even Hamilton seems forced in this direction at times, stating, "I do not mean to suggest that Moses knew precisely *how* the expectations would be fulfilled, but expect fulfillment he did."[27] The resulting position falls short of conscious human authorial intent. It seems better described as a general awareness by human authors of the trajectory of Scripture and the divine superintendence of their writing.

Harmonization

Next, the relationship between prosopological and typological exegesis is a complicated problem that demands a solution before the discussion can move

23. Proponents of this restriction are generally concerned that not requiring human authorial intent will result in a hermeneutical free-for-all. How can we limit the divine authorial intent when God is infinite? If we cannot limit it, how can it mean anything?

I propose that we can justify claims of divine authorial intent in the same way we justify human authorial intent: through textual evidence. God's omniscience simply makes the pool of textual evidence broader (i.e., the entire canon). This is not meant to imply metaphysical univocity between the divine and human authors of scripture. God is transcendent. The single audience of both the human author and the divine author, namely humanity, however, is not transcendent. We as the recipients are finite, so the communication must be finite, even as it gives us access sacramentally to the infinite. Both the intentions of the human author and the accommodated intentions of the divine author therefore exist in the creaturely realm as we perceive them. It is true that God in himself is infinite; however, when he acts in time, the creaturely effects of his actions are finite. I see no reason to believe that his accommodated speech in Scripture is anything other than a creaturely, analogical reflection that participates in his infinite mind. Thus, an appeal to divine authorial intent that transcends the human author does not at all mean that the divine intent is limitless. We see a similar phenomenon in miracles: they are not infinite displays of power. They simply transcend human power.

24. This is not to place the revelatory nature of the world on par with the revelatory nature of scripture. Providence is general revelation, while scripture is special. Special revelation is covenantal. General revelation theoretically exists apart from the covenants.

25. See Carter's comments in Tabb, *Five Views*, 291.

26. Consider the apologetic value of demonstrating convincingly an authorial intent in Scripture that transcends the human authorial intent! That should not be possible on naturalistic grounds, but, in my view, undeniably appears in scripture. Forcing human and divine authorial intent to be coterminous, misses out on this opportunity.

27. Hamilton, *Typology*, 35.

forward.[28] How do these two methodologies relate? Do they overlap? Are they mutually exclusive? Are they entirely distinct? I propose that both methodologies are used to draw out latent, theologically significant meaning from Old Testament texts, but that the difference lies in whether that latent meaning is directly or indirectly present in the source text. What do I mean by direct and indirect? "Direct" here indicates latent meaning that is immediately present in the Old Testament passage. In Genesis 19:24, for example, the author describes a historical event that seems to require two Yahwehs. That event and its ambiguity, regardless of how one resolves it, is immediately and directly present in the text.[29] No appeal to patterns or analogies is required. Prosopological exegesis can identify the earthly, visible Yahweh of Genesis 18–19 as the Son of God.

In contrast, indirect meaning is present in an Old Testament text by way of patterns and analogies. For example, in the pericope of 1 Kings 10:14–29, Solomon's riches foreshadow the messianic kingdom of Christ pictured in Revelation 21:22–27;

28. This difficulty seems to be the primary issue in Peter Gentry's response to Madison Pierce. See Peter J. Gentry, "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis," *SBJT* 23.2(2019): 105–22. The reader should keep this background question in mind during my discussion of Psalms 2, 24, 110. See later notes for more. See also the recent articles that are critical of prosopological exegesis and in favor of typology: David Schrock, "Reading the Psalms with the Church: A Critical Evaluation of Prosopological Exegesis in Light of Church History," *SBJT* 25.3 (2021): 77–96; "Reading Psalms 2 and 110 with the Grain of Scripture: A Proposal for Reading the Psalter Canonically," *SBJT* 25.3 (2021): 97–120; Peter J. Gentry, "Psalm 110:3 and Retrieval Theology," *SBJT* 25.3 (2021): 149–68. Gentry's article rebuts Matthew Bate's reading of the text of Psalm 110:3 as "I begat you," but falls short of undermining a prosopological reading of the psalm. Dernell ("Typology, Christology and Prosopological Exegesis," 149–51) questions whether the term prosopological exegesis is even useful if the proposed methodology does not match Bates's explanation exactly. I believe the term is useful because it distinguishes the category from typology. Moreover, as someone who agrees with many of the criticisms of Bates, I do not believe the methodology lives or dies with Bates. My own proposal is broader than and modifies Bates. Moreover, my perspective attempts to walk back some criticisms of typology from advocates of prosopological exegesis that I believe are misguided. For such criticisms, see Craig Carter's comments in *Interpreting Scripture*, 194–5. Carter's comments against typology come across as mildly strange given his explicit support on 156–7 for Vosian biblical theology, which is fundamentally rooted in typological readings of scripture. It may be that Carter has in mind approaches to typology which involve rereading and reader-response strategies (e.g., he mentions Richard Hays on 194). Such approaches use the category of typology, but they refuse to ground the patterns in the original meaning of the OT text. Such approaches are indeed sub-biblical and sub-Christian, but they do not justify the rejection of typology as a category. For a discussion of naturalistic typology, see Beale, *Handbook of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 14. For an example of such an approach fleshed out, see Venard Olivier-Thomas, "Christology from the Old Testament to the New" in *The Oxford handbook of Christology*, ed. Francesca Murphy (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015), 21–38. Rome, in its attempt to make friends with Modern Judaism, seems to have embraced this rereading approach to typology.

29. "Direct" and "immediate" do not refer to the temporal mechanics of the passage. For example, a text that is readable using prosopological exegesis may depict an eschatological scene either in the present tense as if it already is happening (e.g., Psalm 24), or in the future tense (e.g., Mal. 3:1).

however, the identification of Solomon with Christ can be made only indirectly through analogy and patterns. Typological exegesis draws out this type of latent meaning.[30] In some cases, both types of latent meaning seem to be present simultaneously in the same text. For example, in 2 Samuel 7:14, Yahweh states to David about his future son, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son." This passage, in one sense, is most closely a reference to Solomon; thus, it is applied to Jesus typologically by way of pattern (Jesus is the ultimate Davidic king). However, the passage also refers to the entire Davidic dynasty as a whole, of which Jesus is a member; thus, the words are, in a sense, spoken to him just as directly as to Solomon. Hebrews 1:5 is therefore correct to view this as the speech of God the Father to his incarnate Son.[31] In these hybrid cases, because the latent meaning is in one sense direct and in another indirect, both prosopological and typological exegesis can be applied to the same text at the same time. They are conceptually distinguishable but not mutually exclusive.[32]

30. Typology, as noted previously, is the natural outworking of the covenantal structure of redemptive-history. Such patterns are not random or arbitrary. For another covenantal discussion of typology, see Samuel Renihan, *The Mystery of Christ: His Covenant and His Kingdom* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2019), 27–39. Dernell uses the phrase "covenantal-typological logic" throughout his article, "Typology, Christology and Prosopological Exegesis". I believe this phrase helpfully communicates how I view typology. Often "escalation of meaning" or a similar category is included in the definition of typology. I also agree with that view. See Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 14 for a brief discussion of escalation.

31. The way in which Nathan's words might apply to Solomon and the way they might apply to Jesus is admittedly somewhat different: Solomon is merely a son by adoption whereas Jesus is the Son by his true and natural generation from the Father. There is an analogous connection between the two sonships. The revelation of Christ's ontological sonship is part of the trinitarian mystery revealed in the NT. I am not suggesting that the author of Samuel or the prophet Nathan understood it. For a discussion of trinitarian mystery revealed in the NT, see Fred Sanders, *The Triune God*, 42–6.

32. Psalm 22, for example, could, in my opinion, be both the words of David and the words of Christ at the same time. Dernell (see previous notes) labels this category of prosopological exegesis as PE2, and is wary of its legitimacy and value. I am less wary because categorizing these texts as prosopological highlights the immediacy with which these scriptural words are the very words of Christ. Christ participates in his type (David) in such a way that David's words are truly his, not merely a pattern for his words to fulfill. Christ also historically as a faithful Israelite literally sang the words of the Psalms as his own prayers.

Other non-Christological examples of typology and prosopological exegesis blurring include Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. Popular Christian interpretation frequently reads these texts as referring to both Satan and ancient near eastern kings at the same time. Michael Heiser shares a much more technical and nuanced form of this view, so it is not restricted to popular interpretation. See *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 75–86.

Additionally, I treat Psalms 2, 24, and 110 primarily prosopologically; however, typology is arguably a factor because all three psalms have historical backgrounds that root them in the life

An additional way the methodologies cohere is that typological reflection on the part of the human author might be the occasion for visionary experiences, which would then require prosopological exegesis to resolve and interpret them. For example, David certainly was aware that his life experience held symbolic, covenantal significance for his future offspring. This is evident from a variety of places (e.g., the way he alludes to his offspring at the end of Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22). If he then had a prophetic experience in which he saw or heard his messianic son, he very likely could have noticed typological correspondences between his life and the content of the vision. He naturally then could have alluded to or intentionally drawn attention to such elements in his written record of the experience.[33] Similarly, Isaiah was surely already aware of various typological motifs, such as the righteous sufferer, as he received and wrote the Servant Songs.

Despite their differences, typological and prosopological exegesis are inextricably linked because of their supernaturalist presuppositions.[34] Both involve, to some degree, reading the Old Testament in light of the New, and both assume the existence of spiritual realities and truths behind the texts. Because of this, neither

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of David: respectively, the Davidic covenant, the transportation of the ark to Jerusalem, and the encounter between David and Goliath.

Another angle in this discussion is the way Augustine uses prosopological exegesis to justify and expound his ecclesiology of *Totus Christus*. His usage of prosopological exegesis should be categorized as PE2, and strikes me as a (justifiable) blend of typology and prosopological exegesis. For discussions of this approach, see the following articles and chapters: Michael Allen, "*Totus Christus* and Praying the Psalms," *Pro Ecclesia* 29.1 (2020): 45–52. Brian E. Daley, SJ, "Is Patristic Exegesis Still Useable? Some Reflections on Early Christian Interpretation of the Psalms" in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, eds. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 69–88 [see esp. 85]. Hans Boersma "The Church Fathers' Spiritual Interpretation of the Psalms" in *Living Water from Ancient Springs: Essays in Honor of Cornelis Van Dam*, ed. Jason Van Vliet (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 41–56. Consider also the work of Edmund Clowney on "the Singing Christ." He effectively uses this methodology even though he never uses the term prosopological. Edmund Clowney, "The Singing Savior," *Moody Monthly* (July–August 1979): 40–2.

In descriptive studies it makes sense for these two categories (typology and prosopological exegesis) to be sharply distinguished; however, in order to make them useful for contemporary hermeneutics, the relationship requires more nuanced definition.

33. Contra Emadi, who seems to pit visionary experiences and typological reflection against each other.

34. Both also have vertical and horizontal dimensions. Prosopological exegesis can look at heavenly realities in the present (relative to the setting of the text) or timeless eternity, and it can address eschatological realities that occur on earth in the future. Similarly, typology can connect type and anti-type along the horizontal plane of redemptive history, but it can also connect mediatorial figures directly to the λόγος ἄσαρκος. Thus, Moses is a type of Christ not merely because he corresponds to the incarnate Son, but because he also corresponds to the pre-incarnate Son who was always present and always the perfect revelation of God. I was first introduced to the vertical dimension of typology by a Duke doctoral student, Nathan Porter. Nathan Porter, "Jesus as the God of Israel: Patristic Christology and the Integrity of the Old Testament" (Conference paper, SBL, History of Interpretation Unit, San Antonio, TX: November 20, 2021). The book of Hebrews seems to do something similar with the tabernacle.

approach is within the bounds for naturalistic biblical scholarship. However, for Christians and those open to supernatural readings of the Bible, neither approach should be automatically ruled out.[35]

Justification for Methodologies

Next, the question that naturally should arise from the discussion above is, "Why use either methodology to disambiguate confusing Old Testament passages?" Is there anything beyond the arbitrary decisions of readers to link them to the text? Yes. There are several reasons that ground typological and prosopological exegesis to the text.[36]

The first is the early church's dual historical experience of Jesus in the incarnation and then the Spirit at Pentecost. This experience is chief among the theological pressures that impelled Christians to think of their God tripersonally. Even before the specific creeds were hammered out, Christians instinctively worshipped the Son and Spirit with the Father. If the God they experienced in the New Testament was tripersonal, it would not be unreasonable for them to assume that the God they experienced in the Old Testament was too. This has naturally led many Christians to search for his triunity in the Old Testament.

Additionally, the Old Testament itself seems to suggest a plurality within the Godhead of Yahweh.[37] This phenomenon is not limited to textual ambiguities such as Genesis 19:24. It is evident in the Angel of Yahweh's simultaneous unity with and distinction from Yahweh (e.g., Judges 13) and alluded to in the hypostatization of Wisdom in Proverbs 8–9. It is also seen in the repeated references to Yahweh's Spirit. Several modern studies, ranging from evangelical to critical to Jewish, acknowledge this theme.[38] Michael Heiser, one of the chief voices in evangelical scholarship on

35. It is not merely that Christian supernaturalism makes such readings acceptable. Indeed, if typological and prosopological readings of the Old Testament are found to have strong explanatory power in comparison to other readings, then they can actually undermine naturalistic biblical interpretation. Thus, such readings, considered from another angle, also can be used to validate Christian supernaturalism. This seems to be close to the point the apostles and early Christians were making by using these methodologies.

36. The first four of these categories come from Bates's discussion of proposals for the origin of Christian trinitarianism. They are also useful for providing theological supports for prosopological exegesis, especially of the trinitarian variety. See Bates, *Birth of the Trinity*, 13–27.

37. Bates specifically discusses mediatorial figures in second temple Judaism (*Birth of the Trinity*, 19–26.), but this category corresponds to my point well enough.

38. See Michael Heiser, *The Unseen Realm*; Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992); Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Waco, TX: Baylor UP, 2012). See also Heiser's article linking the two Yahwehs to the relationship between El and Baal in the Canaanite pantheon. "Co-Regency in Ancient Israel's Divine Council as the Conceptual Backdrop to Ancient Jewish Binitarian Monotheism," *BBR* 26.2 (2016): 195–225. For a relevant article on trinitarian adumbrations in the Old Testament, see Kevin Zuber, "Indications of the Trinity in the Old Testament," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 33.1 (2022):

angelology and demonology, argues persuasively that two Yahwehs are present in the Old Testament: one visible and one invisible.[39] If indeed readers can glean from clear texts of the Old Testament some plurality—or even tripersonality[40]—within Yahweh, it is not a far leap or unreasonable to consider such a phenomenon to be a solution to ambiguous texts.

Another relevant phenomenon in the Old Testament is eschatological monotheism.[41] The concept is that second-temple Jews expected an eschatological appearance of Yahweh to come and deliver them. The early Christians naturally associated this appearance of Yahweh with Jesus of Nazareth (e.g., Mark 1:1–3). Coupled with their historical experience of Jesus and the Spirit, as well as the plurality of Yahweh already present in the Old Testament, this eschatological expectation of Yahweh led Christians to identify Jesus with the figure of Yahweh in many prophetic texts. Many of these texts anthropomorphize Yahweh or blur the lines between him and the future messianic king in ways that almost invite prosopological exegesis.[42]

The fourth relevant category is the influence of Ancient Mediterranean culture.[43] Both Bates and Pierce connect Hellenistic drama and rhetoric to the identification of ambiguous persons in Old Testament texts.[44] Peter Gentry critiques this element of Pierce's—and, by extension, Bates's—argument as tenuous, and his point may have merit.[45] However, a direct—let alone causal—link between marginal scholia in Greco-Roman drama manuscripts (or the instructions of rhetorical handbooks) and the practice of early Christians is not necessary to sustain the argument. Both practices illustrate the natural human impetus to understand ambiguous texts. Ancient readers, whether Greco-Roman gentiles or Christians, wanted to understand the figures in the texts they read just as much as anyone else. This is demonstrable from the question posed to Philip by the Ethiopian eunuch: "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet

47–73. Zuber catalogs many examples of textual phenomena that lead Christians to practice trinitarian prosopological exegesis.

39. See especially *The Unseen Realm*, 134–40. The rest of the book unpacks this theme to varying degrees as well.

40. Plurality in Yahweh is always depicted with pairs (Yahweh and the Angel of Yahweh / Yahweh and Wisdom) or in triads (Yahweh, the Angel of Yahweh, and the Spirit / Yahweh, his Word, and his Spirit).

41. Bates attributes this perspective to N. T. Wright especially *Birth of the Trinity*, 23.

42. See for example the way Isaiah 52:13–53:12, especially at the beginning, uses language of the servant ("high and lifted up") reserved elsewhere for Yahweh (6:1; 57:15).

43. Bates, since he is discussing the origins of the Trinity, brings up Hellenistic philosophy (*Birth of the Trinity*, 16–9); however, as I apply his four categories to my argument, Hellenistic rhetoric and drama are more relevant.

44. Bates, *Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation*, 183–221; Pierce, *Divine Discourse*, 6–8.

45. See "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis," 119. The connection between patristic authors and Greco-Roman techniques is virtually certain. See the citation of Justin Martyr in Michael Slusser "Exegetical Roots," 464, where Justin explicitly justifies his reading strategy by pointing out how pagans read their own texts. Whether the New Testament authors would have been aware of such a literary technique is an open question. See Dernell, "Typology, Christology and Prosopological Exegesis," 140. Paul is certainly familiar with some pagan literature (e.g., Acts 17:28), so the possibility is not out of the question.

say this, about himself or about someone else?" (Acts 8:34). Additionally, Second Temple and Rabbinic sources illustrate a similar methodology among Jewish readers of Scripture. One text, Sanhedrin 38.b, testifies to a Jewish reading virtually indistinguishable from prosopological exegesis. It states,

> The Gemara relates: A certain heretic said to Rav Idit: It is written in the verse concerning God: "And to Moses He said: Come up to the Lord" (Exodus 24:1). The heretic raised a question: It should have stated: Come up to Me. Rav Idit said to him: This term, "the Lord," in that verse is referring to the angel Metatron, whose name is like the name of his Master, as it is written: "Behold I send an angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Take heed of him and obey his voice; do not defy him; for he will not pardon your transgression, for My name is in him."[46]

Moreover, theodramatic readings are comparable in some respects to the this-is-that approach of pesher exegesis. That methodology likewise understood the ancient texts as directly addressing future concerns in ways that required disambiguation.

New Testament era readers were not the only ones to make such exegetical moves. The prophets themselves recognized typological correspondences in earlier Scripture that grew out of redemptive-history's covenantal narrative.[47] Isaiah's deployment of exodus imagery to describe the return from exile is a prime example. Additionally, the prophets, at times, ask the same sort of questions regarding their own visions that practitioners of prosopological exegesis ask. In Daniel 7, the prophet sees his famous vision of the Son of Man and the Ancient of Days making war against the beast. Then, in verse 16, the text reads, "I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this. So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things." The angelic interpreter responds to Daniel's inquiry by identifying the ambiguous figures in his vision. Christians who engage in typological and theodramatic readings are merely following the lead of the prophets who wrote the Old Testament texts.

Finally, the Psalms, the texts under present consideration, possess a prophetic quality. That this was a common belief in the Second Temple is well documented,[48]

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46. I found this text referenced in Michael Heiser, "Co-regency," 209–10. This particular instance of rabbinic prosopological exegesis appears to have been set off by illeism in the source text (which I cautioned against above). However, even though I would not personally endorse this particular exegetical move, the text is still useful because it demonstrates that some Jews made exegetical moves similar to prosopological exegesis.

47. Even apart from the guidance of the prophets, some correspondences, such as the mountain theme, as so clear, they hardly require justification.

48. See David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 15–33. Raymond Jacques Tournay, a critical scholar, argues that the psalms functioned prophetically in the second temple period, but that this was the result of the Babylonian exile. His arguments rely on critical assumptions that I believe artificially date earlier texts as post-exilic. See his book, *Seeing and Hearing God with the Psalms: The Prophetic Liturgy of the Second Temple Period*, trans. J. Edward Crowley (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991).

but the concept arguably goes back to the First Temple. The last words of David, recorded in 2 Samuel 23:1–7, narrate a poetic and explicitly prophetic oracle by David regarding the future of his dynasty, the judgment of the wicked, and the rule of an ideal (possibly messianic) king. If the psalms come from the same author, they too likely describe heavenly and eschatological figures discernable via theodramatic and typological exegesis.[49]

These categories provide external justification for typological and prosopological readings of Old Testament texts. Using these methods in the church is not an arbitrary imposition of foreign theological categories onto the ancient Israelite texts. The practice, far from doing violence to the Old Testament text, is a natural outgrowth of the theology of the text when combined with the apostolic church's experience.

Application to Texts

Having laid down the necessary groundwork, it is now time to apply prosopological and typological exegesis to specific texts. I have chosen Psalms 2, 24, and 110 because, as I have argued elsewhere, they, when read together, depict the same series of eschatological events from different vantage points.[50] Moreover, all three texts supply dialogues and ambiguities that can be clarified fruitfully using prosopological exegesis. They also contain an abundance of redemptive-historical imagery useful for

49. Moreover, David, in this text, seems to link his prophecy to his role as Israel's psalmist.

50. Full acceptance of this point is helpful but not completely necessary to follow my present argument in this paper. For an unpublished presentation of my argument regarding the proposed eschatological vision, see Scott Willis, "The King, the Mountain, and the Armies: An Eschatological Vision in the Psalter" (Unpublished class paper, December 2020). Available at: https://www.icloud.com/iclouddrive/0OcdajK-N3jzBbMV9qAmrygxA#The_King,_the_Mountain,_and_the_Armies_An_Eschatological_Vision_in_the_Psalter.

Various images common to the three psalms lead me to read them together (e.g., enthronement and exaltation of a king, a gentile assault on Yahweh's rule, and Yahweh's subsequent victory over the nations).

For a conceptually similar project, see Abner Chou, *I Saw the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Vision* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013). He analyzes the throne room visions narrated by Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Paul, and John and concludes that they are all describing the same eschatological event—the coronation of the Son of Man—from different angles. He states, "Instead of seeing the visions as related by a common motif or tradition, it appears that they are different facets of the same event…Put differently, the prophets and apostles all saw the same thing, but from varying vantage points or 'zooming in or out' of different parts of this occasion," 2.

David Mitchell, likewise has produced a project similar to mine. See *The Message of the Psalter.* His work, however, is more canonical in its approach, organizing itself along the final textual form of the Psalter. My project, by contrast, is event-based in that it draws out and isolates the Psalter's testimony to a set of eschatological events. These projects I believe are fundamentally compatible. They simply approach the issues from different, mutually-reinforcing vantage points.

discerning typology. For thematic reasons and because it is particularly pregnant with prosopological possibilities, I will begin my discussion with Psalm 24.[51]

Psalm 24

Traditionally, this text has been linked by the church with the ascension of Christ to the right hand of the Father. Modern critical exegesis has moved away from this interpretation; however, I believe prosopological exegesis can help defend the traditional interpretation and explain its origin.[52] The text begins with a declaration of Yahweh's ownership of creation: Yahweh owns the world because he made it. This first section of the text (vv. 1–2) leads into the second one (vv. 3–6): because Yahweh owns the earth, all its inhabitants are accountable to him, the royal judge. The narrator poses the question, "Who may ascend the mount of Yahweh, and who may stand up in his holy place?" The text assumes that Yahweh is personally present in his courtroom at the top of the mountain. This must be the case because otherwise, the mountain would merely be a mountain,[53] and those seeking entrance would not be

51. The eschatological portrait I find depicted in many of the Psalms (indeed, in passages throughout the canon) is not linked to the literary structure of the Psalter itself; thus, it poses no issue for me that I start with Psalm 24 instead of Psalm 2. My biblical-theological approach in this project, as noted above, is event-based, not primarily literary-based.

52. For the sake of brevity, I will skim over all but the most relevant exegetical details. For more details beyond the current summary, along with all my secondary sources and historical citations, see my most recent paper: Scott Willis, "Reading Psalm 24 with the Great Tradition: Identifying and Explaining Two Examples of Patristic Prosopological Exegesis" (Conference Paper, Student Religious Studies Conference, Midwest SBL, Virtual, February 4, 2022). Available at: https://www.icloud.com/iclouddrive/076tFKw31CRfwmvq95YaFtZtw#Reading_Psalm_24_with_the_Great_Tradition; Scott Willis, "Who Is This King of Glory? The Early Church's Christological Interpretation of Psalm 24: A Historical-Grammatical and Canonical Analysis with an Evaluation" (Unpublished manuscript, May 2016). Located at: University of Florida, Gainesville, FL. Available at: https://www.dropbox.com/s/epi8kc9x2aop6xt/Who%20Is%20This%20King%20of%20Glory_Undergraduate%20Thesis%20Final%20Draft.pdf?dl=0. For an abridged version of the paper, see Scott Willis, "The Early Church's Christological Interpretation of Psalm 24: A Historical, Grammatical, and Canonical Analysis," *University of Florida Journal of Undergraduate Research* 18:1 (2016). https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00091523/00799.

53. Compare with the episodes in Exodus 3 and Joshua 5. Moses meets Yahweh/the Angel of Yahweh in an unburning bush on a mountain while shepherding sheep. The mountain itself seems to have no inherent sacredness for Moses is wandering about pasturing his flock, which is not exactly a common occurrence within sacred precincts. However, because Yahweh is personally present at the location, the space becomes holy ground, and Moses is required to remove his shoes. Likewise, Joshua meets the Commander of Yahweh's armies at an otherwise unimportant location, but, because of Yahweh's presence, the ground becomes holy. Similarly, at the dedication of the temple in 1 Chronicles 5, the priests are able to enter the holy place freely. It is only after they retreat and the glory cloud rushes in that the temple space becomes unbearable because of the holiness. All of this shows that a location, even the temple, is made holy—and thereby dangerous to sinners—only because of Yahweh's personal presence at the

required to fulfill such strict demands for purity.[54] The parallelism of the lines illustrates for the reader the movement of pilgrims up the mountain, into the sacred precinct, and before the judgment seat.[55] At the end of the second section (vv. 3–6), it appears that the band of pilgrims has safely entered the presence of Yahweh and received blessing and justification from him. Then, the text becomes confusing.

When the reader finally meets someone entering into the presence of God (v. 7), he or she is not met with a group of pilgrims but a solitary individual: The King of glory. This scene is further complicated when the reader learns the identity of this king: Yahweh himself (v. 8). Two observations are important at this point: (1) Yahweh in verses 7–10 is in the spot where readers would naturally expect to find human pilgrims, and (2) Yahweh is somehow at the top of the mountain and entering the mountain at the same time.[56] As startling as these observations are, they are not lost on even the most critical commentators. Wellhausen states,"It is hardly possible to make a connection out of vv. 7–10 with the preceding verses. For in vv. 3–6 we are told the conditions on which men may come to JHVH at Jerusalem, whereas here the

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location. Additionally, if I am correct that Psalm 24 is historically connected to the transportation of the Ark to the temple mount by David (2 Samuel 6) and Solomon's subsequent installation of it in the temple (1 Kings 8), then David's vision of the Angel of Yahweh in 2 Samuel 24:16–17 is significant. The historical presence of Yahweh at the threshing floor of Araunah (where the Ark ended up under Solomon) and the presence of Yahweh with his Ark (as David and Solomon were transporting it) further justify seeing two Yahwehs in Psalm 24. Moreover, the only way for the pilgrims to be seeking Yahweh's face (v. 6) is for him to be present where they are seeking him, i.e., his mountain. That Yahweh is already present on top of the mountain in Psalm 24:3 is essential to the argument because it sets up the textual ambiguity resolved by prosopological exegesis. As a concession, if it can be demonstrated that Yahweh is not personally present on the mountain, then the remainder of my argument about Psalm 24 is severely weakened.

See also the argument made by Samuel G. Parkison, *Irresistible Beauty: Beholding Triune Glory in the Face of Jesus Christ* (Fearn, UK: Mentor, 2022), 92. He makes the metaphysical point that only God is holy in himself. Creatures (e.g., the mountain) can be holy only in relation to God.

54. The entrance requirements demand of the pilgrims a threefold perfection: inward and outward purity ("clean hands" and "a pure heart"), love toward God and neighbor ("does not lift up his soul to vanity" and "will not make a false pledge"), and active and passive righteousness ("he *has*" and "he *does not*"). Interestingly, from a Christological perspective, these ethical standards can be seen as foreshadowing Christ who ascended mount Calvary in the place of sinners. The only clean hands, the only pure heart, and the feet by which he walked up the mountain were pierced on a Roman cross.

55. "Who may ascend?" → "Who may stand up?" → "He will receive." This progression of actions moves the reader along in a narrative-like fashion. Moreover, the text shifts from a hypothetical question, to a general statement (about ethical requirements), to a specific declaration. This aspect of the parallelism likewise contributes to the narrative-like movement. For more details, see the papers I wrote cited in previous notes.

56. Obviously, Yahweh as God possesses omnipresence. The problem is that the text seems to describe two special and localized manifestations of Yahweh's presence. Michael Heiser's discussion of 2 Samuel 6, the historical backdrop of Psalm 24, in relation to two Yahwehs is useful and supportive of my point. See *The Unseen Realm*, 222–3n.4.

allusion is to an entry of JHVH Himself into Jerusalem."[57] Philip Sumpter, reflecting on this quote from Wellhausen, writes,

> In other words, how is it that Yahweh can already be *in* the temple in vv. 3–6, and thereby function as the *object* of human pilgrimage (note the suffix in v. 6: דרשו), and yet be *outside* the temple in vv. 7–10, himself the subject of a journey to the same location? This incongruity is heightened when the psalm is read linearly according to its canonical shape: in vv. 3–4 a theoretical question is raised as to who may ascend to the temple to meet God within it. When v. 7 opens with the demand that the gates of the temple now open, one expects the pilgrims to be standing there ready to go in. One assumes that the theory of v. 4 has now been put into practice and the promise or wish of v. 5 is about to be fulfilled. It is a shock, then, to discover that the person desiring entry is God and not a righteous pilgrim. For a modern reader, at least, the very shape of the final form invites confusion.[58]

John Goldingay also notes the textual confusion: "Whereas the presupposition of vv. 3–6 was that Yhwh was on Mount Zion and that other people wished to come there, the presupposition of vv. 7–10 is that Yhwh is outside Mount Zion, and the people are urging Yhwh's admittance."[59] One option, preferred by many critical commentators, is to assume the disunity of the text. If, however, one wants to read the text linearly, the ambiguity is unavoidable. How, then, does one resolve the tension?

A prosopological approach to the text recognizes the ambiguity of the passage: two Yahwehs are indeed present, and one really does appear to be in the place we should expect human pilgrims to be. Then, the approach maps onto this ambiguity the New Testament revelation of the Father and Son. We know from the New Testament, especially Hebrews, that the Son of God, in the consummation of his mediatorial work, ascended high above the angels[60] to the right hand of his Father in heaven (Heb. 1:1–4). This paradigm maps delightfully to the theodrama depicted in Psalm 24. There, Yahweh the Son enters into the presence of Yahweh the Father in the place of sinful people, who, through his mediation, receive justification. Given the tight correspondence, the fact that the early church and many interpreters since have received this psalm as a prophecy and depiction of Christ's ascension should come as no surprise.[61]

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57. Julius Wellhausen, *The Book of Psalms* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1898), 174.

58. Philip Sumpter, "The Coherence of Psalm 24" *JSOT* 39.1 (2014): 33. The confusion he describes is precisely the sort that triggers prosopological exegesis.

59. John Goldingay, *Psalms, Volume 1: 1–41* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 361.

60. See my next paragraph. It is possible that Christ's ascension above the angels in Hebrews may be locative and not merely positional. More work is needed on this point.

61. James Hamilton reads Psalm 24 in a similar Christological fashion. See *Psalms: Volume 1* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 307–8. Philip Sumpter states, "Beyond the Father's [sic]

A second ambiguity exists in the psalm that arguably links to the Spirit. Who are the antiphonal voices in verses 7–10? As I demonstrated in my previous papers,[62] the early church commonly identified these voices as those of both the angels ascending with Christ and the angels guarding the gates of heaven. Some modern interpreters may be tempted to dismiss this as fanciful and imaginative eisegesis; however, the identification makes sense from a biblical-theological and typological vantage point. Throughout redemptive history, angels, specifically cherubim, guarded the entrance of Yahweh's sacred mountain in order to keep out humans. If they guarded the earthly manifestations of that mountain—Eden (Gen. 3:24), Sinai (Ex. 19:12), [63] the Tabernacle (Ex. 26:31), and the Temple (1 Kings 6:29)—how much more appropriate is it for them to guard the heavenly mountain? Naturally, as guards stationed to keep out sinful humans, they would react when a human attempted to enter.[64] As far as it goes, this interpretive move by early church commentators is actually more reasonable than it may appear on the surface. Thus, by another example of prosopological, many interpreters have identified angelic voices in this psalm. But are the angels alone? Justin Martyr identifies the voice exhorting the heavenly gates to open as that of the Holy Spirit.[65] One could conceivably view the words "lift up your head, O gates!" as the words of the Holy Spirit spoken through or among his angelic messengers.[66] Since the Spirit is the one who inspires prophecy, it is reasonable to understand him as the one who issues the divine command for heaven's gates to open.

Can more be said about the second Yahweh figure? Yes. In addition to his explicit royal office, he functions as a prophet and priest.[67] If we can typologically identify the mountain in verse three as both Sinai and the tabernacle (in addition to Zion), then one

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recognition of Ps 24's fundamental theological significance, it is interesting to note how well their interpretation accords with the poetic structure of the final form of the psalm." *The Substance of Psalm 24: An Attempt to Read Scripture after Brevard S. Childs* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 237–8.

One might ask, "To what extent was David aware? Would *he* have been surprised?" David was certainly aware his experience foreshadowed his descendant's in some way and that his role as psalmist functioned prophetically. The language in 2 Samuel 22:1–23:7 illustrates this. However, David probably also spoke better than he knew.

62. See the citation of my undergraduate thesis above. The list of names and citations is lengthy, so I will omit them here and encourage my readers to view them by accessing my previous paper. In the appendix to that paper, I include relevant extracts of texts from the patristic authors.

63. Angels are not explicitly mentioned here, but, given the pattern between Sinai, Eden, and the Tabernacle/Temple, it is not unreasonable to assume the boundary around the foot of Sinai in some way symbolized them.

64. This is at least how the patristic logic frequently goes.

65. Bates likewise notes this. See *Birth of the Trinity*, 165.

66. The typical way the Spirit functions in prosopological exegesis is as the one who inspires prophecy. Sometimes, however, he does speak in his own person. See Bates, *Birth of the Trinity*, 28. For a recent work entirely on the Spirit in relation to prosopological exegesis, see Kyle R. Hughes, *The Trinitarian Testimony of the Spirit: Prosopological Exegesis and the Development of Pre-Nicene Pneumatology* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

67. Consider this point in light of Christian theology's common declaration that Jesus is prophet, priest, and king.

who enters that sacred space in the place of the covenant people is certainly imitating Moses and Aaron. Moses ascended to the top of Sinai, leaving the people at the bottom. Likewise, Aaron would enter the holy of holies, leaving the people outside. This prophet, priest, and king also leads the people into a new Eden. This is partly evident from the typology of the angelic guards in verses 7–10, but it also follows from the very first section of the psalm. The beginning of the psalm engages in a form of parallelism called "focusing," in which the reader is led from a larger area to a smaller area.[68] The vocabulary of the verses parallel הָאָרֶץ and יַמִּים (which are all larger) with תֵּבֵל and נְהָרוֹת (which are all smaller).[69]

Moreover, the opening of the psalm contrasts מְלוֹאָהּ (all types of creatures) with יֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ (a term appropriate for human dwellings). This parallelism maps well to Genesis's description of the creation of the world in the context of seas (chapter one) and the creation of Eden in the context of rivers (ch. 2). Notably, the question posed in verse three—Who can enter?—implies a shift in humanity's location away from Eden. When someone enters the mountain (typologically, Eden), that implies they are returning to humanity's original dwelling place in verse two. Thus, we might also say that the King of glory is a new Adam: the one man who represents the people.[70]

Psalm 2

The next text we will address, Psalm 2, frequently appears in discussions of prosopological exegesis. This Psalm, specifically verse 7, is cited at various points throughout the New Testament.[71] The dialogue of verse 7, "Yahweh said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you,'" is repeatedly applied to the resurrected and glorified Christ and his Father.[72] Christians naturally have gravitated toward a prosopological reading of this text for two reasons: (1) the text, while *perhaps* applicable to a historic Davidic king, does not actually identify by name Yahweh's son, and (2) the text of the psalm, as a whole, maps onto the New Testament revelation of the Father and Son very well. After all, the text describes the king as Yahweh's Christ and his begotten Son.

Moreover, as Matthew Bates points out, the begetting of the Son does not occur during the psalm's internal temporal setting but rather *prior* to it. In other words, the Son of Psalm 2 is begotten at some point before the theodramatic setting of Psalm 2. This is evident from the perfect tense of the verb: "Yahweh *said* to me." This

68. The term comes from Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 20–1.

69. Consider Yair Mazor's comments on תבל in "Psalm 24: Sense and Sensibility in Biblical Composition," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 7.2 (1993), p. 305.

70. Note the way these typological connections reinforce a totus Christus approach to this psalm. Note also how similar such an approach is to corporate readings of the I-Psalms (where the king or singer stands in for the people).

71. E.g., Acts 13:13 and Hebrews 1:6. See also the synoptic account of Jesus's baptism where a very similar statement is made explicitly by the Father to Christ (Matt. 3:17, Mark 1:11, and Luke 3:22). If the Father says such words to the Son in the Gospels, why not the Psalms?

72. See Bates's argument that the begetting did not occur at the resurrection or the session. *Birth of the Trinity*, 76–9.

observation helps make reasonable Christians' identification of this begetting with the Son's eternal generation.[73] The following two verses likewise continue the reported speech and occur prior to the temporal setting of Psalm 2. They also, with the imperfect tense, refer to a time of fulfillment subsequent to the psalm text itself. The Son *will* receive from the Father the nations as his inheritance. All of them will be his possession, but to some, he will provide refuge, and others, he will crush. One can possibly see here the dialogue[74] of the *pactum salutis* and decree of reprobation. The psalmist then exhorts the peoples to pay homage to the divine, begotten Son as he receives in time his human, messianic authority over all the nations.

Additionally, this prosopological identification of the Father and the Son is further strengthened when the text of Psalm 2 is read in connection with Psalm 24. In Psalm 24, the *King* of glory ascends to Yahweh on his *mountain* and *holy* place. In Psalm 2, we see that Yahweh has established his *king* on Zion, his *holy mountain*.[75] Conceptually, it is not difficult to imagine the King of glory being enthroned on the mountain at the end of his triumph into the temple. Thus, the prosopological readings of these two texts reinforce each other.[76]

Psalm 110

The third text we will address, Psalm 110, likewise appears often in discussions of prosopological exegesis.[77] The text is, of course, one of the most frequently cited Old Testament texts in the New Testament. One feature of the text that naturally triggers a prosopological reading is the grammatically third-person voice of the first verse: "Yahweh says to my Lord." This makes it easy for readers to interpret this psalm as

73. Bates, *Birth of the Trinity*, 67–71.

74. This is, of course, an accommodated and anthropomorphic description of what happened eternally within the simple mind of the Trinity.

75. The approach I use here by pointing out lexical parallels is similar to the rabbinic method of gezerah sheva. Bruce Longenecker, as quoted by Abner Chou, describes the method thus: "Where the same words are applied to two separate cases it follows that the same considerations apply to both." See *I Saw the Lord*, 7.

76. On top of the verbal parallels I noted, Psalms 2 and 24 are both cited typologically within the Matthean passion narrative (I would argue that Christ's passion functions as a negative/earthly version of his heavenly exaltation). See Tucker S. Ferda "Matthew's Titulus and Psalm 2's King on Mount Zion," *JBL* 133.3 (2014): 561–81; Brian Carrier, "The Triumphal Echo of Psalm 24 in the Gospel According to Matthew," *Biblica* 99.2 (2018): 247–64. Additionally, the historical background of both psalms (the transportation of the Ark and the Davidic covenant) are juxtaposed by the author of 2 Samuel 6–7. These two points further strengthen my argument for reading Psalms 2 and 24 together.

77. David Schrock, "Reading Psalms 2 and 110," advocates reading Psalm 2 and 110 together as I do. He however reads Psalm 2 typologically and Psalm 110 in accordance with Dernell's PE1. I am not opposed to reading Psalm 2 typologically, but I at least want to use PE2. The correspondence of the text with Christ's actual experience is so close that the words are directly applicable to him.

It is worth noting, as well, that I am not the first to link Psalms 24 and 110 together. Irenaeus makes the same move. See Irenaeus, Demonstration of t 22 he Apostolic Preaching 84.

an oracle of David spoken by the Holy Spirit about someone else.[78] Who that someone else is, of course, is the question.[79] Indeed, this approach to the psalm seems to be a notable point of agreement between Jesus and his opponents in the Gospels.[80] Like Psalm 2, this text maps onto New Testament revelation about Jesus and his Father quite well.[81] The text depicts the enthronement of a king at the right hand of Yahweh, who functions as a priest[82] and defeats the enemies—and especially *the* enemy—of God.[83] Like the serpent of Genesis, the kings who opposed Joshua, Goliath the Philistine, and the Beast of Revelation, this enemy's head is crushed by the servant of God. All of these typologically rich events occur at the dawn of the Day of Yahweh,[84] while the resurrected saints gather on the battlefield of cosmic war.[85]

Christians may be tempted to jump the gun and say that the two Lords of verse 1 are an example of the Trinity in the Old Testament; however, the text of verse 1 does not justify this. It is reasonable for Christians to map the Father and Son onto this verse, but the second Lord, semantically speaking, does not actually need to be understood as divine, only as an exalted man.[86] The Hebrew text underlying Lord is

78 . Note, again, this is the most typical way in which the Spirit functions within prosopological exegesis.

79 Even Gentry recognizes this in his critique of prosopological exegesis. "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis," 115.

80. E.g., Mark 13:35–37.

81. I actually believe Psalms 2 and 110 are depicting the same scene.

82. Note how this complements my earlier point about the priestly role of the King of glory in Psalm 24.

83. The enemy in verse 6, the "head over the wide earth," is actually singular even though the phrase is rendered in the plural by most translations. I interpret this figure as the antichrist, modeled off of Goliath. Gentry likewise sees a satanic adversary here, but prefers Chederlaomer as the historical referent. Gentry, "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis," 116. Gentry bases his connection on the discussion of Melchizedek in Psalm 110. I link the text to Goliath because of the Davidic authorship, the mention of a brook (cf. 1 Sam. 17:40), and the crushed head (cf. 1 Sam. 17:49). For someone else who links Psalm 110 to David and Goliath, see Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 147. Jerome also seems to read Psalm 110 against the backdrop of the David and Goliath pericope. See "Letter LXXV," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series*, vol. 1, eds. Schaff and Coxe (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 751. The David and Goliath story is not the only proposed background. Emadi catalogs a variety of typological connections here ranging from Adam to Joshua. See *The Royal Priest*, 101–4. All of the connections involve the typological theme of crushing the seed of the serpent. Kline refers to this sort of eschatological conflict as the Har Magedon Conflict, and he traces its typological pattern throughout redemptive-history from Eden and the serpent to the antichrist and the eschaton. See especially, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon*, 49–57.

84. It seems best to interpret the phrase "womb of the dawn" as metonymy for the crack of dawn.

85. The NIV's translation of "young men" seems preferable to the abstract concept of youth. Compare to Micah 5:7. The language of dew itself may imply resurrection (see Isa. 26:19). Moreover, if these youths are the redeemed saints, how did some of them become young? Resurrection seems implied.

86. In fact, Jesus's interpretation of this text in the synoptics does not require more than this. The "Lord" of Psalm 110:1 only needs to be a greater figure than David.

אֲדֹנָי not אֲדֹנָי and, while אֲדֹנָי is used (as a singular noun) exclusively of Yahweh,[87] אָדוֹן is not. It would seem that verse 1 depicts Yahweh along with a very exalted human king at his right hand.[88]

Verse 5, however, complicates this picture, and prosopological exegesis once again becomes useful for clarifying the text. The verse states that "The Lord (אֲדֹנָי) is at your right hand." The question for the reader is, "Who is the Lord, and at whose right hand is he?" There are two conceivable options: (1) אֲדֹנָי refers back to Yahweh in verse 1, and Yahweh is at the king's right hand as a guard, or (2) אֲדֹנָי refers back to אֲדֹנָי in verse 1, and the king is still positioned at Yahweh's right hand as a symbol of authority. In the first case, the reader ends with an anthropomorphized Yahweh, who drinks from a brook at the psalm's end. In the second case, the reader ends up with a human king placed on the same level as Yahweh.[89] The second reading, in my opinion, is preferable. The pronouns and actions of אֲדֹנָי in verses 6–7 make the most sense with a human as their subject.

Additionally, given the similarity of "sit at my right hand" and "The Lord is at your right hand," it seems to me unlikely that David would switch the referents for the unpointed term אדני in the middle of the psalm. The difficulty of calling a human king

87. In Genesis 19:2 the term אֲדֹנָי functions as a true plural, referring to a pair of angels. In verse 18 the form אֲדֹנָי functions the same way in reference to the same two figures.

88. Some may be tempted to dismiss the Masoretic markings here and repoint the term in verse 1 as אֲדֹנָי. This, however, is untenable. The LXX translation distinguishes between אֲדֹנָי and אֲדֹנָי in Psalm 110 by translating them respectively as κύριος and τῷ κυρίῳ μου. Thus, by at least the time of Jesus, the distinction was established in the text. The Syriac Peshitta likewise maintains the distinction, reading ܡܪܝ and ܠܡܪܝ. The Vulgate as well recognizes the distinction with Dominus and Domino meo.

89. Gentry recognizes this ambiguity but fails to see the usefulness of prosopological exegesis for sorting out the matter. "A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis," 116–7. James Anderson, the editor of Calvin's commentaries, clearly favors reading אֲדֹנָי and אֲדֹנָי as the same figure. James Anderson, ed., *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 307–308 n.1. He argues theologically that the judgment carried out by אֲדֹנָי from verse 5 onward makes most sense when applied to the Son (in light of Jesus's statement in John 5:22 that "the Father has committed all judgment to the Son"). Barry C. Davis likewise seems to favor this approach. Barry C. Davis, "Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157 (April–June 2000): 160–73. Matthew Emadi also holds this position, see: *The Royal Priest: Psalm 110 in Biblical Theolog*y (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022), 123. James Hamilton takes the contrary position, and links "at your right hand" in verse 5 to "at the right hand of the needy" in Psalm 109:31. See *Psalms: Volume 2* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021), 295–6. I am unconvinced that this is a stronger connection than the one between 110:1 and 110:5. Both 110:1 and 109:31 use a different preposition than 110:5, but 110:1 is at least in the same psalm. Thus, I believe connecting 110:1 and 5 is the stronger choice. The Aramaic targum has שְׁכִנְתָּא דַיְיָ ("the dwelling/presence of Yahweh") in verse 5 where the MT reads אֲדֹנָי. Then, starting in verse 6, the subject of the verbs clearly refer to the human ruler: אִתְמַנָּא לְדַיָּן עַל עַמְמַיָּא "he was appointed as a judge over the peoples." I concede that this reflects a grammatically possible reading of the Hebrew; however, it seems to require the flow of the text to be logically disjointed.

אֲדֹנָי is no problem for the Christian who calls Christ Lord.[90] Moreover, a prosopological reading of this text recognizes the ambiguity and resolves it by identifying אֲדֹנָי of verse 5 as the incarnate Son of God coming to judge his enemies.[91]

Conclusion

Prosopological and typological exegesis enable readers to understand these psalms as depictions of heavenly and eschatological realities and to detect trinitarian dialogue and actions within the text. Thus, both are essential tools in my broader project to illuminate and expound these psalms.[92] I have sought in my paper to demonstrate both their viability and usefulness. Prosopological and typological exegesis are not arbitrary methodologies but ones that rest on several strong supports. Moreover, they are capable of producing exegetically insightful fruit.[93]

The eschatological portrait in Psalms 2, 24, and 110 weaves together temple and mountain themes alongside imagery of cosmic warfare, rebellious nations, and victorious saints. Figures such as Yahweh and the divine Davidic king face off against an antichrist adversary. The Father fulfills his timeless promises to the Son. Redeemed sinners follow their priest into a new Eden before the dawn of eternity breaks. Angels by the Spirit proclaim the reign of Christ.

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90. Compare this imagery of an exalted man being called Lord with Philippians 2:5–11. It seems to me they depict the same reality.

91. Compare this reading with the judgment pronounced on God's enemies in Matthew 26:64 and Acts 7:56.

92. My project includes additional psalms, such as 46–48, 97–98, and potentially 22.

93. This is in contrast to the fruitlessness of higher critical readings. Consider the comments from George Dahl regarding messianism in the Psalter:

> There seems to be abroad a strangely perverted and sadistically exaggerated sense of honesty in estimating our sacred writings, according to which one ought always to choose the less worthy and less religious of two possible interpretations of any given passage…If our results [of interpretation] are merely destructive, the suspicion is justified that our theories may be basically wrong. At least whenever we find ourselves replacing order with chaos, and established values with near worthlessness, it behooves us to reexamine both our premises and our conclusions. . . . If this seems like retrogression to more conservative positions, one may answer that, in a surprising number of cases and in every area of life, first impressions are found to be right.

"The Messianic Expectation in the Psalter," *JBL* 57.1(1938): 2–4. See also the comments by Craig Carter in Tabb, *Five Views*, 256:

> Why does the approach that has been derided [supernatural readings] as subjective lead to a coherent system of theology while the supposedly objective approach leads to the fragmentation of the Bible into a jumble of incompatible human opinions? Why is it that the premodern approach can be preached authoritatively as the word of God while the modern one cannot?