

FRIDAY MORNING MEN'S STUDY (09-26-25)

REVIEW

→ICL Weeks 1& 2—Christ in the OT—Prophecy, Preparation, Progression, Participation

→Terminology & Importance of the Study & Interpretive Principles from dissertation chapter 1.

→ICL Week 3—5 LINES OF CHRIST'S USE OF THE OT—by Brad Klassen

1—Christ affirmed that the OT was divine inspired (inspiration).

2—Christ affirmed that was historically accurate (veracity).

3—Christ affirmed that was uniquely authoritative (function).

4—Christ affirmed that was objectively clear (accessibility).

5—Christ affirmed that was intentional prophetic (purpose). **THIS WEEK.**

ICL WEEK #4—IS CHRIST THE MEANING IN EVERY OT PASSAGE?—BY BRAD KLASSEN

Challenging topics & this is a difficult area that keeps us humble in God's providence.

This relates to its purpose—central, foundational purpose—**Christ's teaching about the OT also identified its purpose—intentionally prophetic, written to nurture expectation & HOPE.**

It did not *become* prophetic because of how Christ used it; it was prophetic already *from its original intent*.

A. The OT finds its fulfillment in Christ.

Matthew 5:17-18—Jesus said He did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. All is accomplished.

John 5:39-40—Jesus said OT Scriptures testified about HIM.

Luke 18:31-34—all the things written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. Disciples did not get it, but it was hidden from them.

Luke 24:25-27—beginning with Moses & with all the prophets...the things concerning Himself...

Luke 24:44-45—Jesus taught it before, all things written in Law, Prophets, Psalms.

B. This fulfillment was intended from the beginning. IMPORTANT.

All true believers acknowledge the prophetic nature of the OT, & recognize it from the beginning, not after the fact by Jesus. As Jesus did.

Matthew 5:17-18—not the smallest letter or stroke—jot & tittle—minutest elements, not pass away. IMMUTABILITY of the text—meaning does not change.

Matthew 13:17—many prophets & righteous men desired to see what you see...the OT saints wanted to see because they got the point that this pointed to the future, the Messiah.

John 5:45-49—Scriptures testify to Christ, but it's not His Words, but Moses's words, for Moses wrote about Me—Moses recognized the prophetic nature of the text.

John 5:56—Abraham rejoiced to see Jesus' day & he saw it & was glad.

The dullness of the disciples in understanding the OT & Jesus' own teaching was not due to a wrong hermeneutic, but a spiritual impediment toward connecting the dots. Lacked skill to do theology.

So then IS Christ in Every Passage?

→Challenge: What do we do with those passages that do not speak of Jesus when interpreted literally?

→Is it not the essence of Christian interpretation to find revelation about Christ in every OT verse? **Not exactly.**

→Is our duty to read Scripture not as OT saints or as OT writers intended, but as NT Christians? **Not exactly.**

Christocentric Hermeneutic—an approach to Bible interpretation finding Christ in every passage.

The Christocentric hermeneutic can be summarized by four tenets:

- (1) Every text of the OT is to be interpreted in relationship to Jesus Christ.
- (2) Every text of the OT is to be interpreted in perfect harmony with everything taught in the NT.
- (3) Every text of the OT is to be interpreted in a new, distinctively Christian manner, and not necessarily according to its original language and content.
- (4) Every text of the OT can only be correctly understood through the revelation provided in the NT.

Based on these four tenets, a decisive shift in the way the OT must be interpreted must be accepted.

Example from Ecclesiastes—Jerome (AD 342-420)—shows PRACTICAL implications of this.

Ecclesiastes 2:9-10—Solomon's own testimony of what he tried, as in 1st Kings 4:20-34, but Jerome interpreted this *allegorically* as a reference to Christ's incarnation (v. 9) and His works (v.10)

Ecclesiastes 5:18 of Solomon's carpe diem—seize the day, enjoy life in light of fearing God—but Jerome made it about Eucharist etc & led to monastic lifestyle.

Until the Reformation 16th century recovery of literal approach to interpretation. Calvin said Jerome not useful. Reformers literal hermeneutic recaptured restoration of blessings of marriage & all vocations.

9 Critiques of Christocentric Hermeneutic

Qualifications—

- (1) We agree on the centrality of Jesus Christ as the message of the OT & NT.
- (2) We agree on the meaning of many OT texts that prophesy literally about Jesus Christ.
- (3) We disagree on what to do with the OT texts that do not prophesy about Jesus Christ when read literally.

1—The Christocentric hermeneutic fails to take into account the entirety of Jesus' use of the OT.

Christ certainly identified Himself as the fulfillment of specific OT texts.

Yet He frequently references OT texts without making any connection to Himself.

Matthew 19:3-9 using Genesis 1:27; 2:24, did nothing Christocentric. Jesus expounded Scripture.

See Abner Chou article in TMSJ evaluating Christocentric Hermeneutic.

2—The Christocentric hermeneutic exaggerates the number of supposed *non-literal* uses of OT by NT.

There certainly are challenging texts which appear at first glance to use the OT in a non-literal way to point to Christ. However, it is a very small number. Out of around 350 OT quotes.

Surely some are hard like Matthew 2:14-15 USING Hosea 11:1 “out of Egypt I called My Son.” But the number of only is less than 15 actual texts. Even G.K. Beale admits that.

Of 357, 14 cases exist as possible non-contextual usage, though not necessarily non-contextual, according to Michael Vlach. *The Old in the New*.

3—The Christocentric hermeneutic cheapens the accountability of the OT original audience.

If OT texts did not communicate truth about Christ according to their original, literal meaning, then how could their original audiences be judged by those texts? Jesus said *Have you not read? & It is written*.

John 5:45-49, He said, “*Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father, the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?*”

4—The Christocentric hermeneutic ignores the vibrant anticipatory faith of the OT saints & writers.

Hebrews 11 is the great chapter on “faith” and the heroes and heroines who exemplified it; they are all from OT times, and they are held forth as examples to NT believers.

Matthew 13:17—many prophets & righteous men desired to see/hear what you see/hear.

Consider the expectant faith of Simeon (Luke 2:25-35), who was “looking for the consolation of Israel”, or Anna (2:36-38), who was “looking for the redemption of Jerusalem”.

5—The Christocentric hermeneutic diminishes the importance of other truths revealed in the OT.

When every passage must be interpreted in such a way as to reveal knowledge of Christ or echo NT teaching about Christ, other doctrines are inevitably regarded as of lesser importance.

Creates a false distinction in authority between the “red letters” and the “black letters”.

6—The Christocentric hermeneutic elevates creative theologizing over careful exegesis.

As illustrated by Jerome with Ecclesiastes, a predetermined meaning results in exegetical acrobatics.

Actual details in the text are ignored or twisted if needed in order to achieve the acceptable result.

As soon as the literal meaning of the text is left behind, subjective speculation & creativity take over. Even results in different doctrines from the text because of no objective guardrails or clear guidelines.

The creative genius of the preacher is elevated over the text.

7—The Christocentric hermeneutic fosters a tendency to downplay the OT.

If a hermeneutical shift is assumed to have taken place at Christ’s first advent, then the knowledge revealed *prior* to that advent is *inferior*.

Christians tend to become increasingly ignorant of the OT, its original themes & details & language.

The vast riches of the OT, especially when seen in broader ancient near-eastern context, are lost.

OT illiteracy increases in proportion to Christological exegesis, (partly because it minimizes or misses the texts that actually do contribute to the Messianic expectations.)

8—The Christocentric hermeneutic liquidates the apologetic power of true Christological prophecies.

Isidore of Pelusium (d. 450) warned: “Those who wish to apply the Old Testament in its entirety to Christ are far from correct. In doing so, they provide arguments to the pagans and heretics who reject this principle. ... They do violence to the texts in attempting to extract from them a Christological sense they do not have, and in so doing they end up throwing into discredit the texts that speak quite clearly of Christ.” (Epist. 195).

“For in these cases, a [forced] proof is like unto a suborned witness: it never doth help so much whilst it is presumed to be strong, as it doth hurt when it is discovered to be weak.” (John Hales, “Abuses of Hard Place of Scripture”, Golden Remains, 21).

9—The Christocentric hermeneutic misinterprets the message of Luke 24:25-27.

Luke 24:25-27— O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?”

First, “in all the Scriptures” does not mean “in each text of Scripture”, but “in all parts of Scripture” (the Law/Moses, the Prophets, and Writings/Psalms; see v 44).

Second, what Jesus explains is what “the prophets have spoken.” Intentionality on the part of the original writers—yes, by God—but understood what the original writers intended and wrote.

Third, to not comprehend these things was “foolish.” Dull of hearing, should have seen it.

More concerns could be added & not everything is answered, but these are legitimate concerns.

MORE FROM DISSERTATION CHAPTER 1—WHAT WOULD JESUS SAY?

- **An Issue of Clarity**—Is there a consistent way to know what the Scriptures mean?
- **Jesus Thought This Should be Clear**—Luke 24:13-35
- **Jesus Said It Had Been Taught and Should Be Taught**—Luke 24:44-47
- **Clarity from the Apostles**—1 Peter 1:10-12
- **The Apostles Understood Jesus**—Acts 1-3

“The goal of hermeneutical consistency is to provide a path that can be followed for understanding the Bible in evangelism, apologetics, devotional reading, practical applications, expositional preaching, theological study, polemical debates, and more. May that path lead toward the clarity of Scripture being understood and treasured as God’s faithful revelation that can always be trusted”.