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TRAINING SMALL GROUPS OF CALVARY CHURCH IN
ROSEVILLE AND WHITE BEAR TOWNSHIP,
MINNESOTA TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE
GOSPELS USE THE OLD TESTAMENT

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To Alia, Myra and Ella. You are a daily reminder to me of our generous God.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------------------|--|
| AB | Anchor Bible |
| BDAG | <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other early Christian Literature</i> |
| BECNT | Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament |
| LXX | Septuagint |
| NA ²⁸ | <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle-Aland, 28 th ed. |
| NAC | New American Commentary |
| NIBC | New International Bible Commentary |
| NICNT | New International Commentary on the New Testament |
| NIGTC | New International Greek Testament Commentary |
| NTL | New Testament Library |
| OTL | Old Testament Library |
| THNTC | Two Horizons New Testament Commentary |
| TTCS | Teach the Text Commentary Series |
| WBC | Word Biblical Commentary |

PREFACE

I am indebted to the small groups and facilitators that made this project possible. Thank you for your incredible support. I also want to thank Calvary Church's Senior Pastor, Shawn Winters. Thank you for your care and encouragement. A special thanks to my colleagues, Cheryl Brunkow and Christa Granlund, for suggesting critiques and edits of the small group curriculum associated with this project after reading through multiple drafts. In addition, thank you for your labor in developing the print design. I also have much appreciation for Jon Ochs, Pastor Mike Graham, and Dr. Jeannine Brown. You provided such valuable feedback for the small group curriculum and facilitator training. I also want to thank Kimber Graves in the Office of Doctoral Studies who reviewed my entire project. Thank you to all of my professors at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary who have modeled an insatiable love for the Scriptures. A warm thank you to my supervisors Dr. Gurtner and Dr. Plummer. You not only pushed me to pursue academic excellence but helped me see this project as an act of worship. To my beautiful bride Alia, your encouragement and support have been instrumental in allowing me to complete this project. Your walk with Christ and your love for our girls inspires me daily. Finally, to the only true God, the Lord Jesus Christ, may this project help the reader see the depth and riches of your grace in the Gospels.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Calvary Church has a rich history of discipleship. Senior Pastor Shawn Winters furthers this heritage by bringing a decade of discipleship experience from a large church in a Minneapolis suburb. Under his guidance, Calvary Church adopted the following mission statement shortly after his arrival, “Building relationships, seeing Jesus transform lives.”¹ During the academic year of 2015, I as the Discipleship Pastor convened a team of key leaders to develop a biblical understanding of discipleship. The team decided that the above mission statement is an adequate definition, but it divided the statement into three parts to help congregants better understand Calvary’s mission: building relationships, seeing Jesus, and life transformation.²

Context

The three categories above have been the primary focal points of discipleship ministry for four years. Parsing the mission statement in this way allowed Calvary to strategically approach the discipleship process by developing various resources to further each category; but, these three components of discipleship had not been integrated into the life of the church.

Building Relationships

Calvary leadership has identified small groups as one of the primary contexts for discipleship growth. At the time of this project, Calvary had an average weekend

¹ “About Us,” Calvary Church, accessed September 27, 2020, <https://calvarychurch.us/about/about-us>.

² Tucker Anderson, *Equipped* (Roseville, MN: Calvary Church, 2019), <https://www.calvarychurch.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019-Equipped-Handbook.pdf>.

attendance of twelve-hundred, with roughly thirty small groups meeting around the Twin Cities with three hundred people connected (roughly twenty-five percent of weekend attendance). Various indicators suggested that these small groups provided the structure and context for thriving relationships. First, verbal reports from small group facilitators signified that group members felt well-connected to the church and described meaningful relationships within their groups. Second, small groups were formed by life-stage and mostly reflected the demographics represented at Calvary's Roseville and White Bear Township campuses. Third, the robust small group structure provided sufficient space for connecting newcomers to the church. Connections for new inquiries were made within a week and more than half of Calvary's groups were open to incorporating additional members. Fourth, there was an optimal balance of short-term and long-term groups. Some groups had been meeting for over fifteen years. This suggested that group members had established lasting relationships. In addition to these long-term groups, just over half began meeting within the last few years. These groups were generally more open to inviting new members.

Jesus-Focused

In an effort to further the Jesus-focused aspect of the mission statement, I have employed multiple strategies for developing discipleship curriculum. At the time of this project, groups were encouraged to utilize the study guide related to the weekly sermon with the intent of studying the biblical passage more in-depth. Although groups were encouraged to use the sermon-based study guides, many chose video-based studies through RightNow Media as an alternative. RightNow Media is a large web-based collection of Bible studies and conference sessions which Calvary Church provides its members.³

³ For information regarding RightNow Media, visit www.rightnowmedia.org.

The freedom for groups to use video-based studies highlighted some discipleship concerns. First, the wealth of video material made it difficult to monitor the content and teaching within small groups. This made the pastoral role of exercising oversight of content nearly impossible (1 Pet 5:2; Acts 20:28). Second, while some video studies certainly facilitated in-depth Bible study, many hindered engagement with the biblical text. Many of the groups that chose video-based studies only focused on life-stage issues.

In order to pursue a more strategic approach to studying Scripture, select groups piloted other methods during the 2017-2018 academic year. Calvary Church developed a course in biblical hermeneutics called “Open Up the Book” to train small groups in the careful study and application of Scripture. In addition to offering the course in a classroom format, a teaching team taught the content in the groups. Eleven groups worked through the curriculum and some adopted this study method for their ongoing meetings. Though not all small groups were open to this approach. Some groups felt they had a good grasp on Bible study and did not feel the need to work through the “Open Up the Book” course. These groups resorted to finding curriculum in other places.

In addition to the hermeneutics course, some groups used Tyndale House Publishers’ “Immerse: The Bible Reading Experience” format.⁴ This approach to Bible study encourages groups to ask basic observation questions while reading through the Old Testament and New Testament published in a user-friendly format without chapter and verse divisions. Although it is more akin to a discussion group than a Bible study, the pilot small groups found the approach to foster good discussion. While this approach excels in nurturing excitement around Bible reading, it does not promote the study of the Bible.

⁴ More information about the *Immerse: The Reading Bible* can be found at www.immersebible.com.

Transformational

In an effort to highlight the importance of individual and corporate transformation, Calvary Church has utilized various resources and networks within the faith and work movement. Due to Calvary's proximity to Bethel Seminary and its "Work with Purpose" initiative, staff members have taken part in various seminary training events to invite pastors into this theological discourse.⁵ In addition to the "Work with Purpose" initiative, three of Calvary's pastors are members of the "Made to Flourish Pastors Network" which equips church leaders to develop a faith and work ministry.⁶ These programs have influenced a number of recent discipleship initiatives. First, the entire pastoral staff has read and discussed Tom Nelson's monograph, *Work Matters*, as a theological and ecclesiological introduction to the topic. Second, to bring these faith/work themes to the congregation, Calvary has twice hosted RightNow Media's "Work as Worship" conference in February of 2018 and 2019. While all of these initiatives have been important for furthering discipleship, this faith/work movement has one major deficiency. The faith/work language generally focuses on one's paid occupation but neglects the other spheres of life. With this deficiency in mind, pastoral staff decided that the language of "whole-life discipleship" (i.e. learning to follow Jesus in every aspect of life) is better terminology because it encompasses all of life and not just one's paid work.⁷

⁵ More information about Bethel Seminary's work with purpose program can be found at <https://www.bethel.edu/seminary/about/initiatives/work-with-purpose/>.

⁶ "About," Made To Flourish, accessed September 27, 2020, <https://www.madetoflourish.org/about/>.

⁷ I discovered the phrase "whole-life discipleship" in Tracy Cotterell and Neil Hudson, *Leading a Whole-Life Disciplemaking Church*, Grove Leadership Series (Cambridge, UK: Grove Books Limited, 2012), 15.

Integration

As is evident from the preceding background, I as the Discipleship Pastor had not adequately integrated the “Jesus-focused” and “transformational” components of discipleship into small groups prior to this project. The resources noted above are biblically focused, but the lack of direction meant that small groups chose to find their curriculum from other avenues. The emphasis on whole-life discipleship was promoted at the large church level such as with the “Work as Worship” event but the ideas of whole-life discipleship had not informed small group studies. Although committed to small groups (relationships), fostering an engagement with Scripture (Jesus-focused) and whole-life discipleship (transformational), Calvary still lacked an approach to fully integrate these three emphases into the life of the church.

Rationale

The preceding context raised the all-important question: is there a method to combine the small group structure, the focus on engagement with Scripture, and the whole-life discipleship endeavor? Through this project, I proposed that a small group curriculum that explores how the Gospel of Matthew identifies Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel’s Scriptures is a viable approach. I sought to show that such a curriculum would meet Calvary Church’s three-fold discipleship method because it is a small group study (relational), its focus is on the study of Jesus (Jesus-focused), and the intertextual nature of the Gospels introduces one to larger biblical themes and the narrative flow of the Bible—the theological foundation for whole-life discipleship (transformational).

Biblical Rationale

Luke 24 provides a compelling biblical rationale for integrating the three foci of Calvary’s mission statement via a study of one of the Gospels. On the road to Emmaus, Jesus encountered two confused disciples who were trying to make sense of the crucifixion and the empty tomb rumors (Luke 24:24). Jesus responded by interpreting

these events through the lens of “Moses and all the Prophets” (Luke 24:27).⁸ When Jesus shared in table fellowship with these disciples their eyes were opened to understand his scripturally rooted identity (Luke 24:31). In this passage there is a focus on relationships (table fellowship), seeing Jesus in the Scriptures, and life transformation as the two disciples proclaim their experience to the eleven (Luke 24:33-34). In some way, this event is a microcosm of what each of the four Gospels accomplish in their unique presentations of Jesus as the goal of Scripture’s metanarrative.⁹ Chapter two explores Luke 24 in detail and demonstrates how Jesus’ hermeneutic informed the mission of the early church. Although I argue that Jesus’ conversations in Luke 24 provide the context for the theological foundation of this project, a curriculum on the Gospel of Matthew, rather than the other three Gospels, provides a more accessible primer to introduce participants to the relationship between intertextuality and biblical theology.¹⁰

Theological Rationale

The literature on whole-life discipleship commonly focuses on how the grand narrative of the Bible climaxes in the person of Jesus Christ; however, prior to this project Calvary did not use a curriculum to introduce small groups to this grand narrative and its importance for discipleship. Through this project I sought to show that a study on how the Gospel of Matthew uses the Old Testament provides this theological foundation. According to Richard Hays, the Gospel writers, “interpreted his life, death, and resurrection in relation to those biblical stories (i.e., the texts that Christians later came to

⁸ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references in chapter one come from the English Standard Version (ESV).

⁹ Jonathan T. Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 242.

¹⁰ Chapter three will highlight in greater detail the reasons why I chose to focus on the Gospel of Matthew as opposed to the other three Gospels.

call the Old Testament).”¹¹ Most are simply not aware of Scripture’s overarching storyline and would not be able to articulate how Jesus is the culmination of the Old Testament’s major themes and types. This means that many read the Gospels (Matthew included) without regard for the Scripture they reference. In chapter three, I contend that a disciple must have at least a basic understanding of how the Gospel writers connect Jesus with Israel’s Scriptures in order to form a biblical theological foundation for discipleship. As mentioned above, this project chose to narrow the focus to show participants how the Gospel of Matthew connects Jesus to the larger biblical narrative.

Pedagogical Rationale

The discipline of intertextuality is an alien concept to many in the church. It is not a word uttered in the parlance of a typical Sunday morning conversation and the typical Bible study does not engage in the intertextual nature of the Gospels. And yet as the subsequent chapters of this project will show, the intertextuality of the Gospels is a central strategy of how the Gospel writers present Jesus. Stefan Alkier says that the study of intertextual connections (intertextuality) “concerns itself with the effects of meaning that emerge from the references of a given text to other texts.”¹² In this regard, understanding how the Gospels portray Jesus requires a rudimentary knowledge of the quotations, allusions and echoes of the Old Testament in the Gospels.

This project, which was dedicated to helping groups read the Gospel of Matthew with an eye toward its intertextual nature, accomplished what the preceding small group study proposals lacked. It provided an approach for exploring Scripture’s metanarrative and challenged seasoned Bible readers to consider the more detailed

¹¹ Richard B Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), introduction, para. 12, Kindle.

¹² Stefan Alkier, “Intertextuality and the Semiotics of Biblical Texts,” in *Reading the Bible Intertextually*, ed. Richard B. Hays, Stefan Alkier, and Leroy A. Huizenga (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 9.

nuances of the biblical text. Training small group members in how each of the Gospels use the Old Testament would have been a mammoth project and place unrealistic expectations upon parishioners. For this reason, this project limited its scope to the Gospel of Matthew. By learning how Matthew uses the Old Testament, the hope was that participants would gain the skills necessary to explore the other Gospels and their unique intertextual contributions.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to train Calvary Church small group members to understand how the four Gospels use the Old Testament to establish a biblical theological foundation for whole-life discipleship.

Goals

Each of these goals worked toward creating a culture of informed Gospel reading within a select sample of at least six Calvary Church small groups. The focus of these goals addressed the training of small group facilitators, the implementation of a small group curriculum, and an overall small group culture change which prioritized informed Gospel reading.

1. The first goal was to determine the ability of small group members to recognize the significance of the Gospels' use the Old Testament for establishing a biblical theological foundation for discipleship.¹³
2. The second goal was to develop a five-week small group curriculum around intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew through which trained facilitators led their groups.
3. The third goal was to write a three-session training course to introduce facilitators to the Gospels' use of the Old Testament, explain intertextuality's relevance for

¹³ All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

understanding Scripture's metanarrative, and equip them to lead the five-week small group curriculum.

4. The final goal was to implement the facilitator training and small group curriculum on the Gospel of Matthew to increase the ability of participants to recognize the significance of the Gospels' use of the Old Testament for establishing a biblical theological foundation for discipleship.

The above goals followed the research methodology that is outlined below.

Adherence to this methodology ensured that the goals were measurable and clearly defined.

Research Methodology

The first goal was to determine the ability of small group members to recognize the significance of the Gospels' use the Old Testament for establishing a biblical theological foundation for discipleship. This goal was to be measured by administering the Gospel Fluency Survey (GFS) to facilitators and small group members two weeks prior to the training course.¹⁴ This goal was considered successfully met if six identified small group facilitators and eighty percent of their small group members took the assessments and the assessments were analyzed by the Discipleship Pastor at Calvary Church.

The second goal was to develop a five-week small group curriculum around intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew for the trained facilitators to use in their groups. The effectiveness of this curriculum was measured by the expert panel¹⁵ who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.¹⁶ This goal was considered successfully met if a

¹⁴ See appendix 3.

¹⁵ The expert panel included a Calvary Church staff member, a Calvary Church elder board member, and a Bethel Seminary professor.

¹⁶ See appendix 2.

minimum of ninety percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the ninety percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was to be revised until it met the standard.

The third goal was to develop a three-session training course to introduce facilitators to the Gospels' use of the Old Testament, explain intertextuality's relevance for whole-life discipleship, and equip them to lead the five-week small group curriculum. This goal was measured by an expert panel¹⁷ who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability of the curriculum.¹⁸ This goal was considered successfully met if a minimum of ninety percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the ninety percent benchmark was not initially met, the material was to be revised until it met the standard.

The final goal was to implement the facilitator training and small group curriculum on the Gospel of Matthew to increase the ability of participants to recognize the significance of the Gospels' use the Old Testament for establishing a biblical theological foundation for whole-life discipleship. This goal was measured using a combination of qualitative and quantitative assessment tools. First, small group facilitators and members retook the GFS at the completion of the small group curriculum.¹⁹ The results were compared with the initial assessment using a *t*-test. Second, the author conducted interviews²⁰ with the facilitators to evaluate the quality of the curriculum and experience of the group members. This goal was to be considered successfully met if the *t*-test for the dependent samples yielded a positive statistically significant difference between the pre and post-surveys. A statistically significant

¹⁷ The expert panel included a Calvary Church pastoral staff member, a Calvary Church elder board member, and a Bethel Seminary professor.

¹⁸ See appendix 1.

¹⁹ See appendix 3.

²⁰ See appendix 4.

difference would demonstrate that small group members did grow in their ability to recognize the significance of the Gospels' use of the Old Testament for establishing a biblical theological foundation for discipleship.

Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations

The following definitions of key terms were used in the ministry project:

Intertextuality. Because intertextuality can be so easily identified with the post-modern idea of reader-determined meaning by artificially connecting texts, defining the term is imperative.²¹ Greg Beale provides some helpful clarity in this regard. He defines intertextuality as,

...a procedure by which a later biblical text refers to an earlier text, how that earlier text enhances the meaning of the later one, and how the later one creatively develops the earlier meaning. In this respect, “intertextuality” may be seen as a procedure of inner-biblical or intrabiblical exegesis, which is crucial to doing biblical theology and for understanding the relation of the OT to the NT.²²

Chapter three clarifies and nuances how I understand and employ the term intertextuality and further elaborates on this idea that intertextuality is essential for doing biblical theology.

Metanarrative. Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen in, *The Drama of Scripture*, do a masterful job of defining and describing metanarrative. They understand metanarratives to be stories that,

...are basic or foundational: they provide us with an understanding of our *whole* world and of our own place within it. Such comprehensive stories give us the meaning of universal history.²³

It is through metanarrative, the authors argue, that one “can understand the world and

²¹ G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 39.

²² G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 40.

²³ Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 18.

find meaning.”²⁴

Whole-Life Discipleship. Greg Forster is the director of the Oikonomia Network which seeks to form pastors who “help people develop whole-life discipleship, fruitful work and economic wisdom for God’s people and God’s world.”²⁵ Forster speaks about discipleship as,

...a new way of doing 100 percent of what we do in a different way, rather than a separate set of special activities (i.e., religious goods and services) that we occasionally find time to squeeze into our schedules.²⁶

In other words, whole-life discipleship is learning to follow Jesus in every sphere of life, not just through particular religious activities.

Two limitations applied to this project. First, the success of the project was dependent upon small group participation. Two strategies were implemented to promote engagement: the project focused on a percentage of group participation and the group curriculum was limited to five weeks. Second, the small group curriculum was only as effective as the facilitator’s leadership. The training course was the primary strategy to foster more faithful engagement with the small group curriculum.

Two delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project only focused on small groups. As was mentioned above, small groups were identified as the best context for spiritual growth. Consequently, each group functioned as a lab for piloting and assessing the curriculum. Second, the small group curriculum only focused on the Gospel of Matthew. By gaining familiarity around intertextuality in Matthew, small groups sharpened their observation and reading skills for their own study of the other Gospels. By completing the curriculum, groups were to have the knowledge-base for

²⁴ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 18.

²⁵ “About Us,” Oikonomia Network, accessed September 27, 2020, <https://oikonomianetwork.org/about/>.

²⁶ Greg Forster, *Joy for the World: How Christianity Lost Its Cultural Influence & Can Begin Rebuilding It* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 160, Kindle.

utilizing the tools and resources.

Conclusion

The study of intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew is an invitation to explore the person of Jesus and the grand biblical narrative which provides the theological framework for whole-life discipleship. As the remaining chapters of this project will outline, church leaders can equip their congregations to be faithful Christ followers in their communities by training small groups to read the Gospels in light of their Old Testament connections.

CHAPTER 2

LUKE 24: THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Calvary Church utilized *ReFrame*, a discipleship curriculum produced by Regent College in Vancouver, during the summer of 2016 as part of an adult education curriculum.¹ This course introduced congregants to the significance of the scriptural metanarrative for discipleship by using Luke 24 as a biblical basis. Although the course was theologically robust,² it did not provide a detailed exegetical rationale for why Luke 24 is important for discipleship.

In this chapter I will argue that Jesus' hermeneutical approach to Scripture in the Gospel of Luke provides a foundation for discipleship in the local church. To advance this thesis, I will analyze Luke 24:25-27 and 44-49 in conversation with notable Lukan scholars. The exegetical analysis will first demonstrate that a christological understanding of the Scriptures requires divine initiative. Second, it will establish that Jesus' death and resurrection was the hermeneutical lens through which he interpreted the Scriptures.³ Third, the exegesis will show how Jesus' hermeneutic informed the teaching of the early Apostles. Finally, the present-day ecclesiological implications will be outlined.

¹ Regent College and Vocation & Culture Washington Institute for Faith, *ReFrame: Connecting Faith & Life* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Marketplace Institute), 2014.

² The following scholars were some of the contributors to the course content: Rikk Watts (Research Professor of New Testament, Regent College), Iain Provan (Marshall Sheppard Professor of Biblical Studies, Regent College), and Sarah Williams (Research Professor of History and Christianity, Regent College).

³ For an insightful discussion on Jesus' "christological" understanding of the Scriptures as demonstrated in the Emmaus episode, see, Sven Soderlund, "Burning Hearts and Open Minds: Exposition on the Emmaus Road," *Crux* 23, no. 1 (March 1, 1987): 2-3.

Understanding Requires Divine Initiative

The Emmaus road episode demonstrates that divine initiative and assistance is required for a correct christological reading of Scripture. As two confused and disheartened disciples (one whose name is Cleopas, the other unnamed, v. 18) made their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus and discussed the events that had transpired the prior week, Jesus entered the conversation. The two disciples relayed their obscured version of events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth (v. 19), namely his crucifixion and the news of resurrection (vv. 20, 23). Verse 24 (cf. 24:11) suggests their tone was one of disbelief, “And some of those with us went to the tomb and found it in the same manner as the women saw, but they did not see him.”⁴ Jesus responded to this comment by both critiquing their unbelief and expounding the Scriptures.

Without Understanding

In verse 25 Jesus declared that the two disciples were “foolish” (ἀνόητοι).⁵ They were foolish because they were unwilling to use their “mental faculties” to interpret and understand the events correctly despite hearing the news of resurrection earlier in the morning (v. 22).⁶ Commentators debate the reason for their unbelief. John Nolland argues that their inability to understand was due to the “blinding effect of Satan.”⁷ This seems unlikely since Satan is never mentioned in connection with the disciples’ blindness in Luke’s Gospel. It is more accurate to say that they were not able to understand because

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations in chapter two are my own translation from the Greek text of NA²⁸.

⁵ The term used in this verse for “foolish” (ἀνόητοι) only appears six times in the New Testament. The other references are found in Rom 1:14; Gal 3:1 3; 1 Tim 6:9; and Titus 3:3. Many major English versions translate the term as “foolish.”

⁶ Louw and Nida suggest that the term carries a sense of an “unwillingness to use one’s mental faculties in order to understand.” Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:385–86, Logos Bible Software.

⁷ John Nolland, *Luke. 18:35-24:53*, WBC, vol. 35C (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 1993), 1207, Logos Bible Software.

Jesus' had not enabled them to understand (vv. 27, 31, 32, 45).⁸ It is also likely that the disciples lacked the mental construct of a "suffering Messiah" (vv. 26, 46).⁹ Bock suggests that without this category, they were not able to understand God's redemptive plan.¹⁰ This insight finds support throughout Luke's Gospel. For instance, Peter's statement in Luke 22:33, "And he said to him, 'Lord, I am prepared to go with you to prison, even to death,'" implies that he was willing to fight Jesus' adversaries, even if it meant a bloody end. Peter's misplaced boldness and willingness to suffer is different from seeing suffering and death as the essence of Jesus' messianic mission. Luke 9:18-20 recounts Peter's christological confession followed by Jesus' prediction of his suffering and death (Luke 9:21-22). The Gospel of Matthew includes Peter's rebuke of Jesus (Matt 16:22) which implies that Peter did not connect suffering and messiahship.

When Jesus predicted his death a second time (Luke 9:43b-45) the text says that the saying "was hidden (ἦν παρακεκαλυμμένον) from them" (v. 45). In his third passion prediction (Luke 18:31-34) Jesus described in greater detail what awaited him in Jerusalem and connected his suffering and death to the Old Testament prophetic witness (Luke 18:31). Again, the disciples did not understand. The text says, "this word was hidden from them and they did not understand the things that were said" (ἦν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο κεκρυμμένον ἀπ' αὐτῶν καὶ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκον τὰ λεγόμενα, Luke 18:34). Nolland understands παρακεκαλυμμένον and κεκρυμμένον as "supernatural" passives—with Satan behind the unbelief of the disciples.¹¹ But as was stated above, the evidence is not present in Luke to support such an assertion. Both Joel Green and Robert Stein submit

⁸ Joshua Mann, "What Is Opened in Luke 24:45: The Mind or the Scriptures?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 135, no. 4 (2016): 799.

⁹ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, vol. 2, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 1916.

¹⁰ Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1499.

¹¹ John Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34*, WBC, vol. 35B (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 1993), 515.

that παρακεκαλυμμένον and κερυμμένον are “simple passives.”¹² According to Green, the hiddenness is because the disciples did not have the “conceptual equipment necessary to link what Jesus holds together in his passion predictions, namely, his exalted status and impending dishonor.”¹³ To state Green a different way, the disciples lacked the hermeneutical framework to anticipate a dying and rising Messiah (this could in part be due to the historical reasons that Bock mentions). As will be demonstrated below, understanding the Scriptures requires the transformation of one’s cognitive faculties (vv. 32, 45).

In addition to their “foolishness” (i.e. unwillingness to understand), Jesus describes the disciples as “slow of heart in order to believe” (βραδεῖς τῆ καρδίᾳ τοῦ πιστεῦειν, v. 25). This phrase in conjunction with ἀνόητοι forms a hendiadys and describes the two disciples as both unwilling to understand, and slow to put the messianic pieces together. Bovon clarifies that their unbelief was not merely “intellectual” but also “emotional, personal, existential, holistic.”¹⁴ Similar to Bovon, Joel Green argues that “heart” refers to one’s “disposition” or “attitudes.”¹⁵ Both Bovon and Green’s understanding align with the preceding point, that the two disciples were deeply resistant to belief. Luke paints the portrait of holistic unbelief, comprising the heart, mind, and emotions.

A crucified Messiah was off the radar for the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:21) and the eleven in Jerusalem (Luke 24:38). What disciples (both past and present) need, in

¹² Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, vol. 24 (Nashville: Holman Reference, 1993), 291; Joel B. Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts: Divine Action, Human Cognition, and the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 92–93.

¹³ Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts*, 93.

¹⁴ For more conversation on the holistic nature of the disciples’ unbelief, see François Bovon, *Luke: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 19:28-24:53*, vol. 3, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. James E. Crouch, *Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 374.

¹⁵ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 848.

the words of Tannehill, is a “new vision of how God works salvation in the world.”¹⁶ As the next section will show, Jesus explains the Scriptures to craft this “new vision” of a God who works through the very worldly systems that the disciples only thought brought defeat (vv. 20-21).

Jesus Explains the Scriptures

Jesus did not leave these disciples to stumble in their confusion and ignorance; he “interpreted (διερμήνευσεν) in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself, beginning with Moses and from all the prophets” (v. 27). The word for “interpret” (διερμηνεύω) is only used six times in the New Testament.¹⁷ In five instances, the word is used with reference to the translation from one language to another, or the interpretation of a language (“tongue”).¹⁸ Luke used the word with a slightly different nuance in 24:27.¹⁹ In this instance, Jesus “interprets (διερμήνευσεν) in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” This type of interpretation was conceptual—at the level of ideas.²⁰ Jesus most likely taught from the entirety of the OT Scriptures as the three-part division

¹⁶ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation, The Gospel According to Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1991), 1:282.

¹⁷ Four of the occurrences are in Paul’s sections on spiritual gifts and the interpretation of speaking in tongues. Acts 9:36 uses the word to translate an Aramaic name to a Greek name.

¹⁸ See the following passages where the term διερμηνεύω is used with reference to translation of interpretation of a language: Acts 9:36; 1 Cor 12:30; 14:5, 13, 27.

¹⁹ Ian Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 897.

²⁰ BDAG suggests that one of the meanings in the semantic range of διερμηνεύω, is to “clarify someth. so as to make it understandable, explain, interpret.” Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Walter Bauer and William Arndt, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 244.

(“Law of Moses,” the Prophets, and Psalms) in verse 44 suggests.²¹

It is because he clarified the meaning of the Scriptures that the disciples were able to claim that Jesus “opened” (διήνοιγεν) the Scriptures to make them intelligible (v. 32). This assertion came only after “their eyes were opened and they recognized him” (αὐτῶν δὲ διηνοιχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν) in the context of table fellowship (v. 31).²² There is no indication that these two disciples understood that Jesus was their interpreter prior to verse 31. It is only after their “eyes were opened” that they truly understood that Jesus had “opened the Scriptures.”²³ Tannehill correctly sees the Emmaus episode as paradigmatic of the human experience.²⁴ This view is supported by the continual explanation of the Scriptures in light of Jesus’ death and resurrection by the Apostles in the book of Acts (see Acts 2:14-41; 3:17-25; 8:26-40; 10:43; 13:15; 24:14; 26:22-23; 28:23). Unless one explains the connection between Jesus’ suffering and resurrection to the Old Testament prophets, people misunderstand the Scriptures.

It is worth mentioning that Luke places particular emphasis on the Spirit in both the communication and understanding of the gospel message. Acts 1:8 emphasizes that it is the Holy Spirit who empowers Jesus’ followers to be witnesses of his death and resurrection (cf. Luke 24:48). This Spirit-empowered witness is modeled in the book of Acts. For example, Acts 4:8 describes Peter as “filled with the Holy Spirit (πλησθεὶς πνεύματος ἁγίου) before he gave his testimony before the religious leaders (for Jesus’ prediction, see Luke 12:12). After the believers prayed for boldness (Acts 4:23-30) to

²¹ Nolland, *Luke: 18:35-24:53*, 1205; Stein, *Luke*, 612; R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections*, in vol. 9 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 486; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 848; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, ed., *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB (Garden City: New York, Doubleday, 1985), 1567.

²² Richard B. Hays, “Can The Gospels Teach Us How to Read the Old Testament?,” *Pro Ecclesia* 11, no. 4 (2002): 417.

²³ Soderlund, “Burning Hearts and Open Minds: Exposition on the Emmaus Road,” 3–4.

²⁴ Tannehill, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 282.

continue to proclaim the gospel (v. 29), they were “all filled with the Holy Spirit” (ἐπλήσθησαν ἅπαντες τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, v. 31). In Peter’s paradigm shifting event in Acts 10, the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles (v. 44) after they heard Peter’s preaching. In the preceding discussion on Jesus’ role in opening hearts, minds, and the Scriptures, it should not be forgotten that the Spirit also plays a role in both the proclamation and understanding of the gospel.

Open Minds

After realizing that the mysterious traveler was Jesus, the two disciples made their way back to Jerusalem to proclaim the good news. Jesus appeared to the disciples and they too were gripped with unbelief (vv. 38, 40).²⁵ It is not until verse 45 when Jesus “opened” (διήνοιξεν) the minds of the disciples that they were able to “understand the Scriptures” (τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς).²⁶ In Luke’s account, the experience of the two parallels the experience of the eleven. For both groups, divine initiative was required (described as either “opening eyes” in v. 31 or “opening minds” in v. 45) to understand correctly. The identical experience of the disciples only reinforces Tannehill’s observation that ignorance of Jesus’ interpretation of the Scriptures is a universal problem.²⁷

Jesus’ Death and Resurrection as the Foundation for Scripture’s Interpretation

The Emmaus road disciples and the eleven in Jerusalem were incapable of understanding the death and resurrection by their own volition. A suffering Messiah was

²⁵ That the eleven disciples were also clouded with unbelief speaks to the truth of Tannehill’s statement above. One could also point to the example of the unbelief of the women in Luke 24:4. Unbelief and ignorance of the Scriptures is a universal problem.

²⁶ Mann, “What Is Opened in Luke 24,” 799.

²⁷ Nolland, *Luke: 18:35-24:53*, 1207; Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke*, 486; Karl A. Kuhn, “The Emmaus Story: Resurrection as a Transformative Transition,” *Proceedings* 16 (1996): 22–23.

outside their mental framework (Luke 24:11).²⁸ Ironically, these events (death and rumors of resurrection, Luke 24:20, 23, 37) that caused the cognitive turmoil were the foundation of Jesus' exposition. In the next section I contend that Jesus' suffering and glorification/resurrection were the primary foci of his scriptural hermeneutic.

Suffer These Things and Enter His Glory

After chastising the Emmaus road disciples for their ignorance and unbelief, Jesus commented in verse 26 that it was “necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into his glory” (ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ). Many scholars have discussed the significance of ἔδει in Luke's Gospel.²⁹ Luke uses ἔδει eighteen times which is the most of the four Gospels.³⁰ Of these eighteen occurrences, seven are related to Jesus' suffering and/or death (9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 22:37; 24:7, 26, 44). In Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:37, Jesus predicted his own suffering and impending death³¹ while in 24:6-7 the two angels recalled Jesus' predictions:

Remember as he spoke to you while he was still in Galilee saying that, “it is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and to be crucified and on the third day to rise.”

These three predictions (9:22; 17:25; 22:37), and the pronouncement by the angels (24:6-7) anticipates Jesus' proclamation (24:26, cf. 44) that it was “necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into his glory.” The antecedent for “these things” (ταῦτα) is most likely verse 20—the last reference to Jesus' death by crucifixion.

²⁸ Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1916.

²⁹ See, Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 1566, for his comment on the connection to “salvation history”; N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 651. Wright suggests that the use of “edei” connects the story of Jesus to the “story” of “Israel's scriptures”; See also, Kuhn, “The Emmaus Story: Resurrection as a Transformative Transition,” 23.

³⁰ Matthew has 8 occurrences, Mark has 6 occurrences and John has 10 occurrences. ἔδει occurs in the following verses in the Gospel of Luke (2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 11:42; 12:12; 13:14, 16, 33; 15:32; 17:25; 18:1; 19:5; 21:9; 22:7, 37; 24:7, 26, 44).

³¹ It is possible that 13:33 is another prediction. Jesus says, “But it is necessary for me to go today and tomorrow and the coming day, because it is not possible that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.” On my understanding of this verse, it is necessary that Jesus go to Jerusalem so that he might perish.

What does Jesus' mean by "and enter into his glory (δόξαν)" (v. 26)? Liefeld and Pao suggest that "glory" is a reference to the suffering of Jesus.³² This does not seem likely given Luke's usage of "δόξα" (glory) earlier in his Gospel. In Luke 9:26, Jesus spoke about the "glory" in which the "Son of Man" will appear along with the "glory" of the "Father and the holy angels." The very next pericope (9:28-36) recounts the Transfiguration and the text says that Peter, James and John, "saw his glory" (Luke 9:32). Luke connects the glory of the "Son of Man" and Jesus' "glory" by juxtaposing these two episodes. The select three were privy to catching a glimpse of Jesus' future resurrected glory on top of the mount. In Luke 21:27, Jesus again spoke about the apocalyptic coming of the "Son of Man" and his accompanying glory.

The preceding verses display the connection between the future glory of the "Son of Man" and the glory of Jesus. When Jesus proclaimed to the two Emmaus road disciples that it was necessary for the "Christ to enter into his glory" (24:26) it is possible to understand the future glory of the Son of Man as having begun in his resurrection.³³

It is Written the Christ Should Suffer and on the Third Day Rise From the Dead

In the presence of the eleven disciples in Jerusalem, Jesus again said in verse 46, "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and rise from the dead on the third day" (οὕτως γέγραπται παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ). The parallel nature of verse 26 and verse 46 further proves that Jesus connects resurrection and glorification.³⁴ Although the connection between Jesus' death and resurrection and his interpretation of the Scriptures is implied in verse 26, he made the

³² Walter L. Liefeld and David W. Pao, *Luke*, in vol. 10 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 347.

³³ Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke*, 478.

³⁴ Darrell L. Bock and Benjamin I. Simpson, *Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 513. Bock suggests that Jesus' glorification is "implied" in verse 46.

connection explicit in verse 46.

The specific Scriptures Luke had in mind is a matter of speculation. The only explicit OT quotations in Luke's Gospel which possibly allude to suffering and death are Psalm 118:22-23 (Luke 20:17) and Isaiah 53:12 (Luke 22:37).³⁵ Even more elusive are passages referring to Jesus' glorification/resurrection. It is possible that Psalm 110:1 (Luke 20:42-43) or Isaiah 40:5 (Luke 3:6) are allusions to glorification, but this is difficult to determine.

Rather than pinpointing specific Scriptures, it is more likely that Jesus "holistically" connected his ministry to the Old Testament.³⁶ While certainly there are specific OT references that anticipate the coming of a Messiah, it is more likely that Jesus was referring to the larger story woven throughout the Scriptures culminating in the Messianic age which he inaugurated (i.e. more of a focus on "salvation history," see the reference to Kuhn below).³⁷ The entirety of Scripture (the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms) arcs toward Jesus' messianic ministry.³⁸

Jesus' Interpretation Informed the Teaching in the Early Church

Thus far, this chapter has demonstrated that Jesus' death and resurrection formed the foundation for his scriptural hermeneutic and that divine interpretation and illumination were required for the disciples' understanding. This next section will show that Jesus' hermeneutic formed the "witness" of the early church.

³⁵ Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, ed. W. Ward Gasque, NIBC (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 359.

³⁶ Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1936.

³⁷ Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1936; Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 857; Kuhn, "The Emmaus Story: Resurrection as a Transformative Transition," 22.

³⁸ For more on Luke's use of Scripture see, Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations*, ed. Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 408.

Repentance and Forgiveness Should be Proclaimed in His Name

Jesus commissioned the disciples in verse 47 by saying that the Scriptures foretold that “repentance for the forgiveness of sins be proclaimed in his name to all the Gentiles, beginning from Jerusalem” (καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς³⁹ ἅφεςιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ). Κηρυχθῆναι is the third in the list of aorist infinitives each modifying γέγραπται (the others being, παθεῖν and ἀναστῆναι).⁴⁰ In other words, the proclamation of Jesus’ death and resurrection was foretold in the Scriptures.

Spirit Empowered Witnesses

In Luke 24:48, Jesus told the disciples, “You are witnesses of these things” (ὁμεῖς μάρτυρες τούτων). Jesus’ death and resurrection (v. 46) are the antecedents of “these things” (τούτων) and form the content of the disciples’ witness. Jesus continues, “And behold I am sending the promise (τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν) of my Father to you. But you remain in the city until you are clothed with power from on high” (v. 49). It was their experience of the death and resurrection (v. 48), the hermeneutical instruction that they received from Jesus (vv. 27, 46-47), the opening of their minds (vv. 32, 45), and the reception of the Spirit (24:49) that qualified them for being Jesus’ witnesses (Acts 1:8; 2:32).⁴¹

Peter’s Sermon in Acts 2

Peter’s Pentecost sermon is an example of how the early church’s teaching was

³⁹ There is strong manuscript support for both εἰς (p75, κ, B, sy^p, co) and καὶ (A, C, D, K, L, N, W...). For the purposes of this project, the manuscript tradition suggested by NA²⁸ will be used.

⁴⁰ Bock and Simpson, *Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels*, 513. Bock and Simpson make the important observation that Luke structures that which was foretold in the Scriptures around three infinitives in verses 46-47.

⁴¹ John T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 492.

modeled after Jesus' hermeneutic in Luke 24. This connection will be demonstrated in two ways. First, Peter views Scripture through the hermeneutical lens that Jesus established. Second, he utilizes similar vocabulary that appears in the Lucan commissioning.

Taking his hermeneutical cue from Jesus, Peter constructs his paradigmatic sermon (Acts 2:14-41) around three direct quotations from the LXX (Joel 3:1-5; Psalm 15:8-11; Psalm 109:1).⁴² Peter's quotation (2:17-21) of Joel 3:1-5 follows the LXX; however, there is at least one notable difference. In the LXX, Joel 3:1 reads, "And it will be after these things that I will pour out from my Spirit upon all flesh" (Καὶ ἔσται μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα).⁴³ Acts 2:17 says, "And it will be in these last days, says God, I will pour out from my Spirit upon all flesh" (καὶ ἔσται ἐν ταῖς ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, λέγει ὁ θεός, ἐκχεῶ ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύματός μου ἐπὶ πᾶσαν σάρκα). By deliberately changing "And it will be after these things" to "And it will be in these last days," Peter made the theological argument that the events of Jesus inaugurated the eschaton.⁴⁴ Joel mentioned that these last days would be marked by "wonders" (τέρατα) (Joel 3:3 LXX). In his commentary, Peter said that God performed (ἐποίησεν) "wonders" (τέρατα) and "signs" (σημεῖα) through Jesus (v. 22). By using the same vocabulary found in Joel, Peter connected the eschatological "wonders" predicted by the prophet to the work of Jesus.

Peter continued in verse 23, "delivered up by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God through the hands of lawless ones, you executed him by nailing him to a cross" (τῆ ὀρισμένη βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ ἔκδοτον διὰ χειρὸς ἀνόμων

⁴² Evans, *Luke*, 357.

⁴³ The LXX text in chapter two is from *Septuaginta: With Morphology*. Electronic ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), Logos Bible Software.

⁴⁴ For further discussion on this topic, see John B. Polhill, *Acts*, NAC, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 109, Logos Bible Software.

προσπήξαντες ἀνείλατε). Jesus, the one who performed the eschatological signs and wonders, was crucified according to the plan of God (i.e. what was foretold in the Scriptures). But God also “raised” (ἀνέστησεν) him up (Acts 2:24). Peter used the same language that Jesus used in Luke 24:46 (suffering and resurrection language).⁴⁵

In his argument for the resurrection, Peter quoted exactly from Psalm 15:8-11 (LXX) in verses 25-28. Because David died and was buried (Acts 2:29) he must have been speaking (i.e. prophesying) about another “holy one” (τὸν ὅσιόν, Ps 15:10 LXX)—namely Jesus (v. 31). Using language from Psalm 15:8-11 (LXX), Peter commented, “Looking ahead, he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that he was neither *abandoned* (ἐγκατελείφθη) to hades, nor did his flesh see *corruption* (διαφθοράν)” (Acts 2:31, emphasis mine). By using the psalmist’s language (see the italicized words above), Peter connected the Psalm to the events surrounding Jesus’ death and resurrection. He then specifically tied Jesus’ “exaltation” (ὕψωθεις) to the Pentecost event (Acts 2:33). It was because of Jesus’ exaltation to the right hand of God that he was able to pour out the Spirit (see Joel 3:1 and Acts 2:17).⁴⁶

For Peter, Jesus’ ascension is predicted most clearly in Psalm 109:1 (LXX). The Lord (τῷ κυρίῳ) to whom the LORD ([ὁ] κύριος) speaks is none other than Jesus (v. 36)—the one Peter’s listeners “crucified.”⁴⁷ The last word of Peter’s sermon is “crucified” (ἐσταυρώσατε, Acts 2:36), which recalls Jesus’ teaching on his suffering (Luke 24:46) and emphasizes the importance of the crucifixion in the plan of God.

Peter’s preaching led to conviction. Just as Jesus predicted, the proclamation of

⁴⁵ Soderlund, “Burning Hearts and Open Minds: Exposition on the Emmaus Road,” 4.

⁴⁶ Bock and Simpson, *Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels*, 514.

⁴⁷ In Acts 2:36, Peter connects Jesus’ to “κύριον” in Psalm 109:1. Peter declares that “God made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified” (2:36). In this verse, the accusative complement “κύριον” is set in an emphatic position. It is possible Luke places κύριον in an emphatic position to make the explicit connection to Psalm 109:1.

his crucifixion and resurrection would lead to “repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (μετάνοιαν εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, Luke 24:47). When his audience asked what they were to do (Acts 2:37), Peter responded, “Repent (μετανοήσατε), and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (εἰς ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὑμῶν) and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (v. 38). Again, Acts 2 and Luke 24 share similar vocabulary. According to Peter, the Holy Spirit is the promise (ἡ ἐπαγγελία) (v. 39), perhaps recalling the words of Jesus in Luke 24:49. The structure of Peter’s sermon around three Old Testament passages and the use of vocabulary found in Luke 24 shows that Peter was influenced by Jesus’ instruction.⁴⁸

Ecclesiological Implications

Thus far, I have argued that understanding the Scriptures requires divine initiative, that the death and resurrection formed the hermeneutical lens through which Jesus taught the Scriptures to the disciples, and that the model that Jesus established informed the teaching of the early church. A sufficient foundation has been established to further the primary thesis of this chapter—that the example of Jesus’ hermeneutic should inform the teaching (i.e. discipleship) of the local church. In order to draw out the implications of Luke 24:25-27, 44-49 for discipleship today, it is first important to clarify what is meant by discipleship.

In his important work, *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew’s Gospel*, Michael Wilkins traces the etymology of μαθητής and related terms. In his study he notes that during the New Testament period the term carried “the general sense of a ‘learner,’ and...the technical sense of a committed follower.”⁴⁹ The quality of learning

⁴⁸ Evans, *Luke*, 357.

⁴⁹ Michael J. Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew’s Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 124.

and the type of following was according to Wilkins “determined by the one leading.”⁵⁰ Merely looking at the etymology of the term, μαθητής, will only bring one so far in understanding Christian discipleship. One must also examine how “following” and “learning” are understood within the Gospels and Acts for a holistic and nuanced perspective.

Although the Gospel of Luke uses the term “disciple” (μαθητής) less frequently than the other three,⁵¹ his two volume Gospel offers a unique perspective on Christian discipleship. Many of the discipleship themes introduced in Jesus’ ministry continue through the ministry of the Apostles in the book of Acts not least of which is his pattern for teaching Scripture as demonstrated in Peter’s Pentecost sermon.⁵² Richard Longenecker highlights other examples of these connections. For instance, he notes that the two primary themes (Holy Spirit, and “God’s redemptive activity”) that appear in the Nazareth episode (Luke 4:14-30), also play a prominent role in Peter’s sermon (Acts 2:17, 23).⁵³ These connections in Luke-Acts are one of Luke’s rhetorical strategies to argue an important theological point: Jesus’ teaching should inform the teaching of his followers—hence the dual concept of “learner” (learning a teaching method from Jesus) and “follower” (continuing Jesus’ example in the book of Acts).⁵⁴

Longenecker’s work on discipleship is insightful as it draws out the connections between Luke-Acts; but surprisingly, Jesus’ explanation of the Scriptures

⁵⁰ Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew's Gospel*, 125.

⁵¹ The Gospel of Luke references μαθητής 37 times, while the book of Acts uses the term 28 times.

⁵² Richard B Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 353. Hays argues that the connection between his Gospel and Acts is Luke’s way of calling attention to the “continuity of the biblical story.”

⁵³ Richard N. Longenecker, “Taking Up the Cross Daily: Discipleship in Luke-Acts,” in *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 71, Logos Bible Software.

⁵⁴ Longenecker, “Taking Up the Cross Daily,” 53–54.

(Luke 24) does not appear in his discussion. It is quite astounding that Luke's commissioning—the major transition from the ministry of Jesus to the Holy Spirit's ministry through the Apostles—does not feature in his argument.⁵⁵ At this important transition in Luke-Acts, Luke argues that the teaching of Jesus' followers should be modeled after Jesus' handling of the Scriptures. Luke reinforces this idea throughout the book of Acts. Jesus' instruction about the Scriptures informs the teaching in Acts (as was demonstrated in the analysis of Peter's sermon) and is an important part of Luke's understanding of discipleship.⁵⁶ Fitzmyer makes the important observation that Jesus' instruction became “the model” for how the early church read the Old Testament.⁵⁷

In what ways should Jesus' hermeneutical instruction inform discipleship in the church today? The remainder of this chapter will apply the preceding exegetical conclusions to discipleship in the local church by exploring the role of the divine and human agent in scriptural interpretation, reading Scripture from a post-resurrection perspective, and modeling Jesus' example in contemporary discipleship (teaching) ministry.

The Divine and Human Agent in Scriptural Interpretation

In chapter 24, Luke uses “διανοίγω” on three different occasions to refer either to the opening of eyes/minds or the “Scriptures” (vv. 31, 32, 45). He utilized this same term in the book Acts with reference to understanding the Scriptures in light of Jesus' death and resurrection. Although fully understanding conversion and Scriptural understanding cannot be reduced to the use of one word in Luke-Acts, the use of

⁵⁵ Kuhn, “The Emmaus Story: Resurrection as a Transformative Transition,” 17; Culpepper, “The Gospel of Luke: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” 856.

⁵⁶ Longenecker, “Taking Up the Cross Daily,” 53–54.

⁵⁷ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 1565.

διανοίγω at the major transition in Luke-Acts and its association with the reoccurring theme of understanding the Scriptures invites a focused study.

The word διανοίγω only appears eight times in the New Testament and seven of these occurrences are in Luke-Acts.⁵⁸ On five occasions “opening” refers either to “opening” the Scriptures, or “opening” one’s mind or heart to the Scriptures (Luke 24:31, 32, 45; Acts 16:14; 17:3). The passages in Luke 24 have already been examined, and as would be expected, Luke continues this important theme of “opening” in the book of Acts. In Acts 16:14 Luke says, “And a certain woman named Lydia heard us, a merchant of purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, one who feared God. The Lord opened (διήνοιξεν) her heart to pay attention to the things spoken by Paul.” The Lord is the one who “opened her heart” to “pay attention” to the good news proclaimed by the Apostle.

In Acts 17:2-3 Luke says, “He went into them, according to Paul’s custom, and reasoned with them on three sabbaths from the scriptures, opening (διανοίγων) and pointing out that it was necessary (ἔδει) for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead and that this Christ is Jesus whom I proclaim to you.” Jesus “opened” the Scriptures in Luke 24:32, but Paul was the one who “opened” the Scriptures for the Thessalonians by closely following the pattern that Jesus established.

In Acts 8:26-40, Philip had an encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch—another model of opening the Scriptures in the book of Acts. In the episode, an angel directed Philip to go to the road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza. As he was on his way, he encountered an Ethiopian reading from Isaiah 53:7-8. The eunuch was not able to understand the passage (Acts 8:30-31) and needed a “guide” (v. 31) to properly interpret what he read. It is only when Philip “opens his mouth” (and by implication the Scriptures) in verse 35 (ἀνοίξας δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ) and speaks about Jesus that the eunuch understood and was baptized (vv. 36-38). Again, the theme of “opening”

⁵⁸ Διανοίγω appears in Mark 7:34; Luke 2:23; 24:31, 32, 45; Acts 7:56; 16:14; 17:3.

plays a prominent role in understanding the Scriptures.

In Luke 24:32, Jesus opened the Scriptures, and in Luke 24:31 and 45 he opened the “eyes” and “minds” of the disciples. In Acts, God is the one who opened Lydia’s heart (Acts 16:14), while the Apostles were the ones who opened the Scriptures (Acts 17:2-3; 8:35). Understanding the different types of “opening” and the roles of the divine and human agents are instructive for the church today. First, God is still the one who opens one’s mind or heart in order to understand the Scriptures. This reality is just as true today as it was in the Apostolic period. Second, the human agent assumes the role of “opening” the Scriptures (see Acts 17:3; 8:35). This “opening” must follow the model that Jesus established by viewing the Scriptures in light of his death and resurrection as both Philip and Paul exemplify.⁵⁹

The Gospels and Acts are guides for the church to faithfully “open” the Old Testament Scriptures so that the congregation can understand their meaning.⁶⁰ They illustrate the very hermeneutic that Jesus established in Luke 24. In, *The Gospels for All Christians*, Richard Bauckham points out that the scholarly consensus is that the Gospels were written primarily for a Christian audience.⁶¹ Their audience is important for understanding their nature and purpose. Because the Gospels were written for a Christian audience, their primary purpose was not evangelism. This statement is consistent with Luke’s introductory comments in his Gospel. Luke says that the purpose of his Gospel was to instill “certainty” for Theophilus about what he already knew about Jesus (Luke

⁵⁹ David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Luke,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 401, Logos Bible Software.

⁶⁰ Jonathan Pennington elaborates on this idea that the Gospels help the church to understand the Scriptures. See, Jonathan T. Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 230.

⁶¹ Richard Bauckham, ed., *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 9–10; Bock and Simpson, *Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels*, 84. Bock and Simpson note that the Gospels were written for the “church at large” in other words, the Gospels were written for a primarily Christian audience.

1:3-4). The Gospels were written in order to instruct the church about Jesus and help those in the church understand the full ramifications of their faith.⁶² The Gospels also aided the earliest Christians in understanding the role and place of Scripture in light of their newfound faith. By making frequent allusions and quotations to the Old Testament, the Gospel writers reminded the earliest Christian communities that they continued in the long pattern of salvation-history because of God's revelation in Christ.⁶³

Reading Scripture from a Post-Resurrection Perspective

In his recent monograph, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, Richard Hays argues that Jesus shows us how to “read backwards” and understand the Scriptures in view of the crucifixion and resurrection.⁶⁴ This practice established by Jesus was taken up by the Gospel writers themselves. The Gospel writers engaged in the practice of “figural reading” while utilizing the Old Testament as their “encyclopedia of production.”⁶⁵ By “encyclopedia of production,” Hays refers to the way the Gospel writers used the language of the Old Testament to interpret and understand the significance of Jesus.⁶⁶ In other words, the Gospel writers were engaging in the Emmaus road hermeneutic by looking back to the Scriptures in light of Christ's coming and “re-reading” their Scriptures in light of new revelation.

Thomas J. Millay issues a helpful critique of Hays to nuance his approach.

⁶² Pennington makes the important observation that the Gospels filled a need for Christians who already knew about Jesus. The Gospels in written form allowed the traditions and stories about Jesus to be passed on to later generations. In other words, it was the centrality of teaching about Jesus in the early church that led to the production of the Gospels, not the other way around. See, Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction*, 233–34.

⁶³ Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 427.

⁶⁴ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 348.

⁶⁵ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 347, 357.

⁶⁶ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 10.

Bringing Hays in conversation with John David Dawson's monograph, *Christian Figural Reading*, Millay distinguishes between how the ancients viewed Scripture from how many contemporary exegetes handle the texts.⁶⁷ According to Millay, the ancients viewed Scripture as making "intentional predictions" while many modern exegetes, including Hays, view Scripture as "a text that constructs identities and forms meanings" and any reference to Jesus Christ is understood "retrospectively."⁶⁸ In his article, Millay sets these two positions at odds with one another.⁶⁹ As the exegesis of Luke 24 shows however, the two positions need not be mutually exclusive. One can take Hays' position that the Gospel writers did in fact use the Old Testament as the "encyclopedia of production" and to be read "retrospectively"⁷⁰ and still affirm that the Scriptures are ultimately "predicting" the Messiah.⁷¹ Because Scripture is divinely inspired, one can rightly understand the Old Testament as predicting through the means of typology and "prefiguration."⁷² To understand the Old Testament this way requires divine assistance (Luke 24:45), and as was demonstrated above, is central to Jesus' hermeneutic.⁷³

⁶⁷ John Dawson makes the helpful distinction between the "allegorist" reading of Origen and the Alexandrian school and the concept of "figural reading." In his monograph, Dawson references Jewish philologist, Erin Auerbach's concern with an allegorical reading. According to Auerbach an allegorical reading rejects or diminishes the historical reality of the text while the "figural reading" takes into account the historical nature of the text even if it is believed to point to something beyond itself. See, John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 10–11.

⁶⁸ Thomas J. Millay, "Review of Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 145-146.

⁶⁹ Millay, "Review of Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels," 145–46.

⁷⁰ Hays argues that a "retrospective reading" suggests that the Gospel writers read the Old Testament as "prefiguring" Jesus Christ, not necessarily "predicting" Jesus Christ. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 2.

⁷¹ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 250.

⁷² Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, 2–3.

⁷³ The Gospel writers will frequently cite Old Testament references which in their original context do not appear to be speaking about the Messiah (e.g. Mic 5:2; Isa 7:14; Jer 31:15; Hos 11:1). While verses such as Hosea 11:1 are speaking about the nation of Israel, Matt 2:15 "retrospectively" looks back and sees this verse as a "prefiguration," to use the words of Hays above, of the childhood journey of Jesus' family. Matthew can even go so far and say that Jesus Christ was a "fulfillment" of Hosea's words.

By using the Old Testament as the “encyclopedia of production” for understanding the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Gospel writers consciously link the story of Jesus to the story of Israel.⁷⁴ For example, twelve times, Matthew uses the verb “πληρώω” to underscore that Jesus fulfills some aspect of Israel’s Scriptures.⁷⁵ When Matthew cites Isaiah 7:14, Hosea 11:1; Jeremiah 31:15; Isaiah 9:1, 2, to state only a few Old Testament connections, he connects Jesus to major events in Israel’s story but reinterprets them in light of Christ. By connecting Jesus to these foundational Scriptures, the Gospel writers understand that Jesus fulfills various “patterns” of God’s past salvific dealings with Israel.⁷⁶ By making these “intertextual connections,” the Gospels, in the words of Pennington, interpret “the events of Jesus’s life as the goal and telos of the story of God.”⁷⁷ Jesus’ reference to Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms in Luke 24 validate Pennington’s comment. Pennington goes on to argue that the Gospels make this connection,

...in the ways in which Jesus reenacts and completes Israel’s history such as with his water crossings and wilderness feedings (Matt 14:13-33) as well as in more explicit comments such as the hermeneutical procedure Jesus gives for reading the Jewish Scriptures in Luke 24:27.⁷⁸

In order to understand the larger storyline to which Pennington speaks, the church must reconsider Jesus’ invitation to read the Scriptures afresh by paying attention to how the Gospel writers utilize their post-resurrection christological hermeneutic.

⁷⁴ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 250.

⁷⁵ Matt 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54; 26:56; 27:9.

⁷⁶ Bock refers to this type of prophetic fulfillment as “pattern fulfillment” (i.e. typological fulfillment). Bock makes the compelling case that “pattern fulfillment” is bidirectional. The Scriptures are illuminated in the coming of Christ and the events associated with his ministry. But the significance of Jesus’ ministry is also highlighted through the typological pattern found in the Scriptures. This “two-way” understanding, to use Bock’s words, is helpful for understanding the way the Gospels writers, and in particular, Luke, use the Old Testament. For more on “pattern fulfillment” and the relationship between “event” and “text” see, Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, 412–13.

⁷⁷ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 247.

⁷⁸ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 247.

Teaching Pattern

There is good reason to believe that the teaching in the early church was modeled after Jesus' approach to Scripture in Luke 24.⁷⁹ Because the Gospel writers engage in the very hermeneutic taught by Jesus, the Gospels played a foundational role in the early church's teaching. In his *First Apology*, early church father, Justin Martyr, includes a description of worship in the early church.⁸⁰ It would be helpful to quote Justin Martyr at length:

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things (*Apology* 1.67).⁸¹

Justin includes the "memoirs of the apostles" (i.e. Gospels) alongside the "writings of the prophets" indicating that by the second century, they were viewed as at least on par with the OT prophets. Regarding the early church's use of the Gospels, Pennington insightfully says,

But the point here is that the Gospels quickly and effectively became the Scriptures for the earliest Christians, both guiding their interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures and providing a lens for understanding and applying the apostolic injunctions of Peter, Paul, James, and others.⁸²

If Pennington is correct, the Gospels served as the early church's primers on how to read the Scriptures, and in this way they were deeply formative in discipling church members. The Gospels should maintain a central role in the teaching of the church. By narrowing the focus to the Gospel of Matthew, the hope is that this project would make a step toward helping the church recover the central role of the four Gospels for discipleship in the local church.

⁷⁹ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 242.

⁸⁰ Jonathan Pennington pointed me to this reference by Justin Martyr. Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 241.

⁸¹ Justin Martyr, "The First Apology of Justin," 186, Logos Bible Software.

⁸² Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 243.

Conclusion and Topics for Further Exploration

This chapter argued that Jesus' hermeneutical approach to Scripture in the Gospel of Luke provides a foundation for discipleship in the local church. This was argued through an exegetical analysis of Luke 24:25-27, 44-49, and comparison to Peter's first sermon in Acts 2:14-41. Three conclusions were reached: understanding the Scriptures requires divine initiative, Jesus' death and resurrection were the foundation for his hermeneutic, and Jesus' hermeneutic informed the teaching of the early church. The last section argued that Jesus' hermeneutic remains instructive for the church today and that the Gospels—and in particular the Gospel of Matthew—provide an accessible primer on reading the Scriptures.

CHAPTER 3

INTERTEXTUALITY, BIBLICAL THEOLOGY AND DISCIPLESHIP FORMATION

The previous chapter argued that Jesus' christological hermeneutic¹ (Luke 24:44-49) was critical in the formation of the earliest disciples as demonstrated in their teaching pattern in Acts (e.g. Peter's Pentecost sermon in Acts 2:14-41).² This chapter shifts attention from the biblical foundations of reading Scripture christologically to explore the implications and practical approach of this hermeneutic for discipleship in the local church. I will argue that one can establish a biblical theological foundation for whole-life discipleship by understanding how the Gospel of Matthew uses the Old Testament.³ To further this argument, I will first propose that Matthew reads the Old Testament christologically through his frequent intertextual connections. Second, I will demonstrate that intertextuality is an entry point for exploring biblical theology. Finally, I will outline the significance of biblical theology for discipleship.

Why the focus on the Gospel of Matthew? Matthew discipled his Christian hearers by foregrounding Jesus' connection to Scripture's major themes and larger story.⁴

¹ I understand "christological hermeneutic" as the reading of Scripture from a post-resurrection vantage point.

² It certainly was not the only thing that formed the earliest disciples. The Holy Spirit also plays a critical role in Luke (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

³ The focus of this chapter is limited to the Gospel of Matthew. The use of the Old Testament in the New is a massive topic, too much for any one chapter to address. Even the use of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Matthew is a daunting undertaking, but I believe it is the best place to begin such an endeavor.

⁴ Charles L. Quarles, *A Theology of Matthew: Jesus Revealed as Deliverer, King, and Incarnate Creator*, ed. Robert A. Peterson, Explorations in Biblical Theology (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 11–12, Logos Bible Software; D. A. Carson and Douglas J Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 156, Logos Bible Software.

For example, in the first two chapters, the evangelist cites the Old Testament on five occasions: Isa 7:14 (Matt 1:23); Mic 5:2 (Matt 2:6); Hos 11:1 (Matt 2:15); Jer 31:15 (Matt 2:18), Isa 11:1 (Matt 2:23). By employing the Hebrew Scriptures in this manner, Matthew draws on what is old to explain a new era in God’s redemptive story. To use the words of Patrick Schreiner, “For Matthew, the best way to show how Jesus disrupts and completes the story of Israel is to employ Israel’s texts in the repainting of Jesus’s life.”⁵ In other words by utilizing the Old Testament in the way that he does, Matthew demonstrates that Jesus is a continuation of the Hebrew Scriptures. In fact, he explicitly refers to the Old Testament more than any other Gospel. While the number of specific quotations varies depending upon the criteria one uses to define a quotation, it appears there are roughly fifty-five quotations. There are only sixty-five quotations in the other three Gospels combined!⁶ France notes that a “conservative” estimate for Old Testament “allusions” in the Gospel of Matthew is 262.⁷ Matthew’s very intentional and explicit use of the Old Testament makes it a fitting primer for recognizing the Old Testament in the New and how Jesus completes the story of Israel.

It is probably a safe assumption that most in the western evangelical church do not know the Hebrew Scriptures as well as many did in the early church. All too often we are quick to gloss over Old Testament intertexts, missing Matthew’s intent. This results in an impoverished understanding of Jesus’ connection to redemptive history. Regarding the early church’s recognition of Matthew’s use of the Old Testament, France says it was the,
basis for theological instruction within the church as teachers and taught delighted to trace the scriptural background to what may appear on the surface to be

⁵ Patrick Schreiner, *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe: The First Gospel and Its Portrait of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 51, Kindle.

⁶ Blomberg counts fifty-five quotations, while France counts fifty-four. Craig Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1, Logos Bible Software; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 10–11, Logos Bible Software.

⁷ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 10–11.

deceptively simple accounts of the family background and early experiences of Jesus of Nazareth.⁸

Although France is referencing Matthew's function in the early church, the obvious question is: can the Gospel of Matthew still have this same impact today? The answer is, yes, if attention is given to Matthew's use of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Matthew's Intertextuality as a Christological Reading of the Hebrew Scriptures

The intertextual nature of the Gospel of Matthew reveals his christological reading of the Hebrew Scriptures.⁹ Intertextuality has been understood in different ways within the field of biblical studies. Paul Koptak and Greg Beale prefer the phrase "inner-biblical witness" (the relationship between biblical texts).¹⁰ By utilizing this phrase, they emphasize the relationship between biblical texts. Richard Hays nuances the New Testament use of the Old through the concept of "figural reading" (i.e. understanding Old Testament people, places, events, "retrospectively")—"reading backwards" (see the title of Hays' monograph and the previous chapter) in light of the person of Jesus Christ.¹¹ Pennington's formulation of intertextuality is when "an earlier text is taken up, transplanted, and transformed in a later text."¹² Incorporating these insights, I define biblical intertextuality *as the author intended use of explicit and implicit connectives*

⁸ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 26.

⁹ A number of recent scholars have done important work in the area of intertextuality. For a sampling of some helpful works on the topic of intertextuality, see: G.K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012); Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016); Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014); John Goldingay, *Reading Jesus's Bible: How the New Testament Helps Us Understand the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2017); Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).

¹⁰ Paul E. Koptak, "Intertextuality," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 332; Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 40.

¹¹ Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 2, 104.

¹² Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 116.

which point to earlier texts that elucidate the meaning of the base text.¹³ The following will expound upon this definition utilizing examples from the Gospel of Matthew.

Author Intended

In many circles, intertextuality is a hyper reader-centered approach to interpretation.¹⁴ For this reason, some (e.g. Beale and Koptak) within the field of biblical studies, reject any use of the term.¹⁵ *Intertextuality* was first coined by Julia Kristeva in her work, *Semiotikè* (published in 1969).¹⁶ Poststructuralists like Kristeva, understand meaning to be fluid and reader determined.¹⁷ Mary Orr's description of intertextuality's emergence as a "linguistic Big Bang" is apt. It arose within the context of Jacques Derrida's *deconstruction* approach to literature within the larger milieu of postmodernism (meaning is deemed a "subjective" experience).¹⁸

Contrary to the conclusions drawn by the poststructuralists,¹⁹ authorial intent plays a necessary role when determining intertexts; but authorial intent must be clarified with two helpful cautions. First, Pennington stresses that authorial intent often

¹³ By "base text," I mean the text which contains the intertexts.

¹⁴ The French poststructuralist, Mikhail Bakhtin, said that the reader's context determines the meaning of a particular text. Others like Roland Barthes argued that the traditional notion of "author" does not exist. A text is always the reinterpretation of something that is already written. Barthes is responsible for coining the phrase, the "death of the author." See, Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, 2nd ed., *The New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2011), 11–12, 71–72, Kindle.

¹⁵ G.K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*, 39.

¹⁶ Mary Orr, *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2003), 21.

¹⁷ I understand that not all poststructuralists and structuralists like to be identified by these terms, but for simplicity sake, these terms will be used.

¹⁸ Orr, *Intertextuality*, 22; Allen, *Intertextuality*, 3.

¹⁹ For the poststructuralists, texts are always deriving new meaning with every subsequent textual interaction because a reader is always bringing a text (knowingly or not) into conversation with other texts in their mental library. See, Steve Moyise, "Intertextuality and Historical Approaches to the Use of Scripture in the New Testament," in *Reading the Bible Intertextually*, ed. Richard B Hays, Stefan Alkier, and Leroy A. Huizenga (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 23.

fallaciously implies that readers can “get into the mind of the author.”²⁰ While indeed an author’s mind is impenetrable, this does not mean that intention is entirely elusive. Texts must be approached with humility by recognizing that complex factors (historical, linguistic, cultural, grammatical, etc.) are at play in hermeneutics.²¹

Second, authorial intent often ignores the role of the divine Author and the canonical nature of Scripture.²² When the focus is narrowed to only address the grammatical and historical concerns, the canonical unity and the *sensus plenior* is overlooked.²³ Acknowledging divine intent and unity of Scripture does not deny authorial intent, but it concedes that intentional intertexts can both illumine a base text and clarify the meaning of earlier texts.²⁴ In other words, author intended intertextuality is a useful—and necessary tool—for engaging in biblical theology (i.e. understanding and tracing larger themes throughout the canon).²⁵

²⁰ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 111.

²¹ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 111.

²² Jeannine K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 225, Logos Bible Software.

²³ By *sensus plenior*, I am referring to the idea that, in the words of Jonathan Lunde, “the meanings and referents he intended in the biblical text may often exceed the limited vision and understanding of the human authors, even though this divine intention retains a ‘homogeneous’ connection to what the human authors intended.” See, Jonathan Lunde, “An Introduction to Central Questions in the New Testament Use of the Old Testament,” in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Darrel L. Bock, and Peter Enns, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 15, Logos Bible Software.

²⁴ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 117.

²⁵ Kevin Vanhoozer provides a helpful description of the “Theological Interpretation of the Bible” (also known as Theological Interpretation of Scripture). This method of reading the Bible keeps in mind the threefold hermeneutical grid that Pennington describes. According to Vanhoozer, the primary goal of the theological interpretation of the Bible is to “know God.” Because the Bible is a coherent book of intertexts, this has to be taken into consideration in the mind of the interpreter, especially if this is part of the intent of the divine Author. For more on the theological interpretation of the Bible, the “Introduction” in *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament* provides a good overview of what it is and what it is not. See, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, introduction to *Theological Interpretation of the New Testament*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Daniel J. Treier, and N. T. Wright (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 24; Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 109.

An analysis of Michael Riffaterre’s approach to intertextuality provides a useful contribution to biblical studies.²⁶ Contrary to Kristeva who espoused an infinite number of intertexts, Riffaterre identifies intertexts as “specific, specialised signs” that “point to its locus, and uncover its identity.”²⁷ In other words intertexts are those references specifically identified by the author.²⁸ Riffaterre names these intertexts as “signposts” and “connectives” which simultaneously encode a problem to be resolved and a resolution found in the intertext.²⁹ The problem/solution paradigm can be applied to biblical intertexts. Take for instance Matthew’s quotation of Hosea 11:1 (Matt 1:15). There are a number of *questions*³⁰ associated with Matthew’s use of Hosea 11:1. Most notably, why did Matthew use Hosea 11 with reference to Jesus (Hos 11:1 is a reference to the nation of Israel)? Secondly, why was Jesus called out of Egypt? What was so significant about this historical event that Matthew recounted Jesus’ experience in the language of the prophet? The intertext underscores these questions, but it simultaneously provides the answers. By quoting this text, Matthew presents Jesus as the one who relives Israel’s experience. The cotext of Hosea 11 speaks of God’s redemptive action towards his people—actions that find fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ.

²⁶ Riffaterre is a structuralist (those who tend to see intertextuality as those connections intended by the author). See, Allen, *Intertextuality*, 4.

²⁷ Michael Riffaterre, “Compulsory Reader Response: The Intertextual Drive,” in *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices*, ed. Michael Worton and Judith Still (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1990), 58.

²⁸ Riffaterre’s model bears similarities with Beale’s understanding of intertextuality as “the procedure by which a later biblical text refers to an earlier text, how that earlier text enhances the meaning of the later one, and how the later one creatively develops the earlier meaning.” See Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 40.

²⁹ Riffaterre, “Compulsory Reader Response: The Intertextual Drive,” 58.

³⁰ I am using the word “questions” instead of “problems” as it is less of a loaded term.

Explicit and Implicit Connectives

How exactly does Matthew use the Old Testament? Certainly, he uses quotations which are often preceded by a “citation formula” (γέγραπται διὰ τοῦ προφήτου,³¹ “it is written through the prophet,” Matt 2:5).³² It is much more difficult to discern allusions or echoes to the Old Testament. The Gospel of Matthew contains many allusions/echoes because the Hebrew Scriptures formed Matthew’s thought world (France counts 262 “allusions”).³³ One should expect the language of the Hebrew Scriptures to permeate the writings of the New Testament through both subtle allusion/echo, and through specific quotations introduced by a formula.³⁴ Twenty-first century readers are far removed from the thought world and culture of the first century Gospel writers making subtle intertexts more difficult to detect.³⁵ While not all scholars distinguish between “allusion” and “echo,” Hays makes a distinction preferring to see allusions as more explicit than “echoes.”³⁶ “Echoes” in Hays’ mind are the most subtle and most difficult to discern. It is possible that a single word can redirect the attentive listener to a familiar Scripture.³⁷ Hays’ distinction however is not helpful. Frequently the line

³¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations in chapter three are my own translation from the Greek text of NA²⁸.

³² Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, introduction, “The design of this book: Scope, structure, and method,” para. 13, Kindle.

³³ Richard Hays refers to the Old Testament as the “encyclopedia of production” for the New Testament authors. John Goldingay similarly refers to the Old Testament as the “theological dictionary” for the New Testament authors. Both Hays and Goldingay helpfully point out that in order to better understand the New Testament, we as contemporary readers need to immerse ourselves in the language and detail of the Old Testament. See, Hays, *Reading Backwards*, xii; John Goldingay, “The Old Testament and Christian Faith: Jesus and the Old Testament in Matthew 1-5: Part 2,” *Themelios: An International Journal for Pastors and Students of Theological and Religious Studies* 8, no. 2 (September 1982): 5, <http://tgc-documents.s3.amazonaws.com/themelios/Themelios8.2.pdf>; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 10–11.

³⁴ Schreiner refers to the Old Testament as the “generative milieu” of the Gospel of Matthew (and by extension the other Gospel writers as well). The Hebrew Scriptures provided the language and background for the evangelists. See, Schreiner, *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe*, 54.

³⁵ Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 39.

³⁶ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, introduction, “The design of this book: Scope, structure, and method,” para. 13, Kindle.

³⁷ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, introduction, “The design of this book: Scope, structure, and method,” para. 13, Kindle.

between allusion and echo is so thin that making any distinction is at best artificial.³⁸ The Father's statement about Jesus at his baptism, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt 3:17), is a fitting example of why distinguishing between allusion and echo does more to obfuscate matters. Most scholars believe Matthew has in mind Psalm 2:7 (LXX),³⁹ "You are my son, today I have begotten you."⁴⁰ But this reference in Psalm 2:7 contains only one word (υἱός) of similarity to the text in Matthew and by Hays' criteria it would be classified as an echo.⁴¹ All that to say, to argue whether Matthew's reference is an allusion or echo distracts from the greater theological implications wrought by the Evangelist. For this reason, this project will use allusion and echo interchangeably.

A subcategory of intertextuality is typology (introduced in the previous chapter as "figural reading").⁴² New Testament typology is the "analogical correspondence" between "persons, events, institutions" and the complete revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ.⁴³ An Old Testament type will consequently receive greater significance with the coming of Jesus. The most significant type in the Old Testament is the exodus of Israel out of Egypt. This event takes on greater meaning and significance with the arrival of Jesus who leads a new exodus for his people (see Luke 9:31). Old Testament figures like Adam also serve as types. The Apostle Paul refers to Jesus as a second Adam (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:45). Jesus as the "last Adam" is the first human being of the new creation.

³⁸ Beale likewise prefers not to distinguish between allusions and echoes. See, Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 32.

³⁹ The LXX text in chapter three is from *Septuaginta: With Morphology*. Electronic ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979), Logos Bible Software.

⁴⁰ Blomberg identifies this as an allusion. See, Blomberg, "Matthew," 14.

⁴¹ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, introduction, "The design of this book: Scope, structure, and method," para. 13, Kindle.

⁴² Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 2.

⁴³ Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 14.

Typological readings such as these are the most common forms of intertextuality in the New Testament.⁴⁴

Elucidate the Meaning of the Base Text

Intertextuality requires both a “forward reading” and a “backward reading.”⁴⁵ A “forward reading” is to understand the Gospels in light of the Old Testament.⁴⁶ The Old Testament intertexts instruct the reader how to think about a New Testament passage from a biblical theological perspective. Take for instance Matthew 28:16-20. The Great Commission can be understood at a fundamental level apart from the Old Testament, but intertextuality clarifies the command to make disciples by further expounding how it is that believers receive authority to make disciples of all nations. Many commentators see a connection between Daniel 7:13-14 and Matthew 28:18-19.⁴⁷ When speaking about the son of man, Daniel says that “all authority was given to him, and all the nations of the earth according to their kind and all glory that they should serve him” (Daniel 7:14 author’s translation from LXX). In Matthew, Jesus receives all authority (ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία, Matthew 28:18) implying that he has also received all of the nations as was described about the son of man. The Danielic intertext provides background information that adds theological depth to Jesus’ command to make disciples.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ I note these typological examples in the small group curriculum I wrote for this project, *Treasures Old and New: The Story of the Bible in the Gospel of Matthew*.

⁴⁵ I am borrowing the “forward” and “backward” reading language from Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 4.

⁴⁶ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 4.

⁴⁷ Jeannine K. Brown and Kyle Roberts, *Matthew*, THNTC (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018), 262, Logos Bible Software; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1112–13; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, WBC, vol. 33B (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 886, Logos Bible Software.

⁴⁸ Hays makes a similar argument regarding “Israel’s new mission to the nations.” See, Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 97–98.

We are also to “read backwards.”⁴⁹ To “read backwards” is to see how the New Testament writers teach the reader how to understand the Old Testament.⁵⁰ In this way the New Testament—and in the case of this project, the Gospel of Matthew—becomes the hermeneutical lens to understand the Hebrew Scriptures.⁵¹ Could it be argued that the New Testament authors operated from a hermeneutic similar to a poststructuralist hermeneutic? The answer is a resounding no! They did not proof-text without regard for the original context of the Old Testament passage. A comment about Goldingay’s distinction between “meaning” and “significance” is helpful in this regard. To quote Goldingay at length,

Its *meaning* is what the Holy Spirit was saying to the people whom the human author was addressing, and the people who received that message and ensured it found a place in the Scriptures. Its *significance* is the way the message was filled out in a context when people saw new implications in it for their situation.⁵²

The New Testament authors do not change the meaning of the Old Testament text; but they do see significance beyond the purview of the Old Testament author.⁵³ Because the Old Testament authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit, their writing contained greater significance than even they could have seen or understood. As the previous chapter argued, it was only after the resurrection and through divine initiative that the New

⁴⁹ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 4.

⁵⁰ This is not to deny the importance of the Old Testament author’s intent. It is precisely the original meaning of the Old Testament quotation or echo that adds richness and depth to its New Testament’s usage. Without the original meaning, the contrasts, ironies, comparisons, and theological claims made by the New Testament author would be unintelligible.

⁵¹ Moyise, “Intertextuality and Historical Approaches to the Use of Scripture in the New Testament,” 23.

⁵² Goldingay, *Reading Jesus’s Bible*, 66.

⁵³ This view is similar to the view of Darrell Bock who espouses, “one meaning, multiple contexts and referents.” While the New Testament authors saw meaning beyond what the Old Testament authors saw, they still did show concern for the original context of the Old Testament passage. See, Darrell L. Bock, “Single Meaning, Multiple Contexts and Referents: The New Testament’s Legitimate, Accurate, and Multifaceted Use of the Old,” in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Darrell L. Bock, Peter Enns, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 106–7, Logos Bible Software.

Testament authors' minds were opened to see the christological significance of the Old Testament.

This view is contrary to the view held by Walter Kaiser. Kaiser contends that the Old Testament writers had the sense of the New Testament authors in mind.⁵⁴ To use his words, "Given the 'generic wholeness' of the divine promise-plan of God, the prophets were divinely enabled to see 'near' fulfillments, as well as some of the more 'distant,' climactic fulfillment of those same near fulfillments."⁵⁵ This view is flawed on both an historical and theological level. For instance, it is hard to believe that Hosea, saw the Messianic significance in Hosea 11:1. A historical grammatical approach to this passage clearly shows that Hosea is looking backward at historical Israel, not forward to a messianic experience. Second, as chapter two argued, the hermeneutic established by Jesus was only understandable from a post-resurrection perspective. Old Testament prophets could not see the full significance of what they wrote by nature of their location in redemptive history. Kaiser's position undercuts the significance of the divine opening in Luke 24.

Even though the New Testament authors saw meaning outside the purview of the human author (but intended by the divine Author), the *significance*⁵⁶ uncovered by the New Testament authors is still dependent upon the *meaning* intended by the Old Testament author. Matthew's quotation of Jeremiah 31:15 (Matt 2:18) illustrates this well. Jeremiah 31:15 is set within the context of Babylonian exile. Jeremiah creatively looks back to the matriarch and describes her as weeping for her children. Matthew says that

⁵⁴ Walter C. Kaiser, "Single Meaning, Unified Referents: Accurate and Authoritative Citations of the Old Testament by the New Testament," in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Darrel L. Bock, Peter Enns, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 65–66, Logos Bible Software.

⁵⁵ Kaiser, "Single Meaning, Unified Referents," 65–66.

⁵⁶ Goldingay distinguishes between an Old Testament text's, "first meaning" and "second meaning" as a way of distinguishing between meaning and significance. See, Goldingay, *Reading Jesus's Bible*, 69.

the slaughter of the Bethlehem boys is a “fulfillment” of this passage. The suggestion that Matthew mistakenly saw this as a prediction passage for the Bethlehem incident is tenuous at best. Matthew knew his Scriptures too well. Instead, Matthew saw the experience of Jesus as paralleling the experience of Israel. Rachel’s weeping over exile receives greater meaning as Matthew also sees her as weeping at the slaughter of the innocent boys in Herod’s effort to kill the Messiah. But just as Jeremiah looked ahead to Israel’s rescue (Jer 31:23-25) and a time of new covenant (Jer 31:31-33), God’s hand of protection and deliverance was also upon Jesus.⁵⁷ The significance of this connection is only clarified when the historical context of Jeremiah is considered. There is nothing for Jesus to parallel if no historical context exists.

Christological Reading and Biblical Theology

Reading Matthew intertextually and utilizing the insights described above is an approach for introducing biblical theology to parishioners. Within recent years, many biblical theological monographs (both scholarly and popular)⁵⁸ have stressed that Christ is the goal and focus of the canon.⁵⁹ On this point, Michael Lawrence accessibly and concisely defines biblical theology as “the attempt to tell the whole story of the whole

⁵⁷ Brown makes a similar argument in Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 37.

⁵⁸ For a sampling of some recent monographs at both the scholarly and popular levels that address the issue of biblical theology, see: Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010); Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006); Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*; G. K. Beale, *God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), Kindle; Schreiner, *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe*; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 15 (Leicester, England: Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2003), Kindle; Timothy Keller, *Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), Kindle.

⁵⁹ Wright argues that the Bible should be read “messianically” and “missionally.” He calls these themes the “hermeneutical matrix for our reading of the whole Bible.” See, Wright, *The Mission of God*, 30–31.

Bible as Christian Scripture.”⁶⁰ Reading the Bible in this way pulls together multiple threads and themes and demonstrates how they ultimately point to Jesus Christ.

While many resources could be mentioned, the “Bible Project” is an accessible and popular biblical theological video series for use in the local church. Its creators, Jon Collins and Tim Mackie, develop artistic and theologically rich videos that trace themes through the Bible, explore word studies, and outline entire books. According to their website, “From page one to the final word, we believe the Bible is a unified story that leads to Jesus. This diverse collection of ancient books overflows with wisdom for our modern world.”⁶¹ Each of the videos underscore the larger story of the Bible and its christological focus.

For as robust as the “Bible Project” videos are, they do the hard work of biblical theology instead of train individuals to trace a theme through the Bible or see the christological emphasis of a particular book. One may argue that consistent demonstration may lead to the imitation of their hermeneutic, but in reality, such an approach does not equip a congregation to do the hard work of Bible study and develop hermeneutical skills.

No doubt there are many accessible biblical theological resources that could be used to introduce a congregation to biblical theology, too many to be addressed here. But the premise of this project is not to impose a biblical theology onto the text but rather begin with the text and then to recognize the biblical theological themes that the inspired biblical author highlights.⁶² Author intended intertextuality exposes a congregation to

⁶⁰ Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 89.

⁶¹ “About,” Bible Project, accessed July 25, 2020, <https://bibleproject.com/about/>.

⁶² A conversation with Daniel M. Gurtner, former Ernest and Mildred Hogan Professor of New Testament at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, helped me clarify the distinction between imposing a biblical theology upon a text and deriving biblical theological themes through careful exegetical analysis.

different threads, theological streams and the *sensus plenior* (see preceding section) of OT texts. In other words, it is biblical theology from the text up.

I will illustrate this concept of biblical theology from the text up via an example in the Gospel of Matthew that incorporates the insights from the preceding section on intertextuality. Matthew's use of explicit and implicit connectives to the Old Testament not only elucidate the meaning of his Gospel, but they are entry points into a christological reading of the Old Testament.⁶³ Intertexts are a creative way of inviting the reader into the larger narrative of which Jesus is the focal point.⁶⁴ Or to say it another way, intertexts are doorways into Scripture's larger story.⁶⁵ By utilizing Riffaterre's question/answer paradigm noted above, one can ask the following questions expecting that the intertext will supply the answer: What was the original historical situation? Where in the larger drama does this intertext fall? Why would the New Testament author choose a particular Old Testament text? Is the author making a contrast? Is he using it as a fulfillment quotation?⁶⁶ The answers to such questions will direct the reader to examine the plotline of Scripture and the meaning of the intertext within the larger metanarrative.⁶⁷

Let us consider these questions using Matthew's genealogical introduction by

⁶³ Goldingay, *Reading Jesus's Bible*, 2; Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 2; Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 246; Schreiner, *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe*, 1.

⁶⁴ Brown suggests that the reader must "enter the world of the text" in order to be "shaped" by the text. See, Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, 46.

⁶⁵ Richard Bauckham makes a similar point in his chapter, "Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story." See, Richard Bauckham, "Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story," in *The Art of Reading Scripture*, ed. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B Hays (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 44.

⁶⁶ Patrick Schreiner in his recent work on intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew suggests similar questions. Schreiner says that the attentive reader should keep the following three questions in mind when reading Matthew's Gospel: "How does this echo Israel's story? How does Jesus fulfill Israel's story? How does it move the story of Israel forward?" See, Schreiner, *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe*, 8.

⁶⁷ There is a postmodern tendency when examining biblical intertexts to downplay the fact that what is being addressed is real history. There actually is a "signified" reality (*contra* Barthes). Brown cautions against using "story" as a way of escaping the historical reality of the text. See, Jeannine K. Brown, "Is the Future of Biblical Theology Story-Shaped?," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 37 (2015): 24.

way of example. Matthew 1:1-17 connects Jesus with the larger story of Israel.⁶⁸ By introducing Jesus as the “son of David” and the “son of Abraham” Matthew *intentionally* (see my definition of intertextuality) presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the promises made to Israel’s king *par excellence* and the patriarch.⁶⁹ To any first century Jewish hearer of Matthew’s genealogy, linking Jesus to Abraham and David would have had massive implications. Although the connection to David and Abraham is *explicit*, the implications of this connection are *implicit* as it would have taken one familiar with David and Abraham to see the worldview relevance. Jesus is connected to the one who received the promise of blessing (Gen 12:1-3) but he also is of Davidic lineage.⁷⁰ In Matthew 1:17, Matthew provides a clue for how to read the genealogy. He highlights Abraham, David, exile, and Messiah. The exile was a major detour and would have called into question the promises originally made to Abraham and David. Had God kept his promises? Had the blessing of Abraham gone unfulfilled? Would David lack a son on the throne forever? Matthew’s intertextual moves provide answers to these questions (i.e. *elucidates* Matthew’s Gospel). By including “Messiah” in verse 17, Matthew declares that the story is not over, God had kept his promises. The exile was coming to an end with the arrival of Jesus.⁷¹ In light of the coming of Jesus, one can read the story of Israel

⁶⁸ Brown argues that the intertexts in the New Testament are not merely “textual,” but they are also a “story phenomenon.” New Testament authors would cite the Old Testament in order to draw the reader into the story of Israel. For more on the storied nature of intertexts and the six reasons that Brown supplies for a New Testament author’s use of the Old. See: Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, 227–28.

⁶⁹ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 25–26.

⁷⁰ Goldingay, *Reading Jesus’s Bible*, 7.

⁷¹ Jeannine Brown notes that many Jews in the first century still thought of themselves as being in exile. Within this context, Matthew’s declaration that the Messiah had arrived would have been particularly striking. See, Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 28.

afresh.⁷² God had not abandoned his promise of universal blessing to Abraham, David would have an eternal Son on the throne, and exile would cease.⁷³

Approaching biblical theology in this manner—from the text up—benefits a congregation in two ways. First, it keeps one in the biblical text. Instead of imposing a biblical theology upon the text—trying to make the text fit with a particular theological commitment—author intended intertextuality raises questions (see Riffaterre) that require the intertext for the answer. In the example above, Matthew’s intertextual allusions challenge the reader to explore the significance of “son of David” or “son of Abraham.” Beginning with the text ensures faithfulness to both the divine and human author’s intention.

Second, exploring biblical theology through intertexts trains one to read the Bible rightly. The intertextual ways Matthew uses the Old Testament guard against inappropriately reading the Old Testament and making biblical theological leaps to Christ that are not present. Intertexts can train a congregation in a back-and-forth reading between the New Testament and the Old Testament. The New Testament provides the hermeneutical lens by which to read the Old Testament and the Old Testament will shed light on the New. This hermeneutical dance will teach one to read with a dual focus, a focus on the text itself (and all of the grammatical and historical issues involved) and a focus on the canon and its goal of revealing Christ.⁷⁴

⁷² Schreiner takes the idea of intertextuality a step further and argues that the very form of Matthew’s Gospel as a whole and the individual stories are structured in such a way as to recall the story of Israel. In reference to the individual episodes throughout Matthew’s Gospel, Schreiner prefers the term “shadow stories” for the way that Matthew structures his Gospel because the way that Matthew writes evokes the story of Israel in both implicit and explicit ways. See, Schreiner, *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe*, 1, 55.

⁷³ Goldingay makes the important point that a Jew who did not believe in Jesus as the messiah would have viewed the story of Israel’s exile very differently. Exile would have still been a very real reality. The climax of the story (the arrival of Messiah) would still be perceived as a future. See, Goldingay, *Reading Jesus’s Bible*, 8.

⁷⁴ Bock helpfully works through the complex question of whether or not modern exegetes can read the Old Testament in the way that the New Testament authors did. See, Bock, “Single Meaning, Multiple Contexts and Referents,” 147–51.

Biblical Theology and Discipleship Formation

What is it about biblical theology that makes it foundational to local church ministry? Lawrence goes so far as to assert that biblical theology is “vital to your work as a pastor or church leader.”⁷⁵ The following will argue that biblical theology is important because it forms the larger story one believes about the world—it forms one’s worldview.

Stories have an amazing ability to shape and transform.⁷⁶ People are captivated by a compelling film; they are absorbed into a riveting novel. Politicians utilize story to paint a picture of what is wrong with society and how they can bring the long awaited solution. Patriots rally around a nation’s story in times of war. Stories have an incredible ability to shape and transform individuals and cultures.⁷⁷ Regarding the transformative power of story, Pennington says, “The most powerful discourse of truth is not abstract doctrinal propositions but stories and images and art because these engage our whole person, not just our minds.”⁷⁸ This is not to diminish disciplines like systematic theology, church history, etc.; but, it is the acknowledgment that human beings are particularly captivated by narrative. The Gospel of Matthew—as he presents the story of Jesus in connection with Israel’s Scriptures—can shape one’s worldview.⁷⁹ To this point Jeannine Brown says, “...we may speak of entering the world of the text as a way of allowing its

⁷⁵ Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 15.

⁷⁶ N.T. Wright suggests human beings view reality—the world—through the lens of story so that we can understand “who we are within” a particular story. See, N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 1:61.

⁷⁷ Leslie Newbigin highlights the transforming power of story in his chapter entitled, “The Roots of Pluralism,” in *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. He uses the illustration of public school curriculum and the competing stories of evolution and the Bible. The story of evolution is a story of the “survival of the strong” to use Newbigin’s words. The story of the Bible is a story that finds its fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ. These two stories are at odds with one another. See, Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 15, Logos Bible Software.

⁷⁸ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 46.

⁷⁹ Wright describes “literature” is the “articulation of worldviews, or, better still, *the telling of stories which bring worldviews into articulation.*” See, N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 1:65.

normative story to shape us.”⁸⁰ By “text,” Brown of course means the biblical text. But Brown’s paradigm can be utilized for Scripture’s larger story as well. We could speak about entering the “world” of the textual metanarrative. As has been argued, the Gospel of Matthew serves as this gateway.⁸¹ The reader can enter the “world of the text” of the Gospel of Matthew and by exploring the multifaceted ways Matthew utilizes the Old Testament, the reader is invited to explore the larger themes and storyline of the Bible (what could be described as the Bible’s metanarrative).⁸²

Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen have tilled the soil for accessible and fruitful thinking about metanarrative. They assert that metanarratives are stories that are “normative” and “comprehensive.”⁸³ In other words, a metanarrative gives shape and meaning to a person’s life.⁸⁴ Christopher Wright similarly contends that a metanarrative “claims to explain the way things are, how they have come to be so, and what they ultimately will be.”⁸⁵ It is a story that answers the big questions of life and undergirds one’s worldview (i.e. outlook on life).⁸⁶ Instead of worldview terminology, Klaus Issler articulates worldviews as “core beliefs”—those beliefs that inform one’s “affective” and

⁸⁰ Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, 46.

⁸¹ Regarding the connection between the Gospels and the larger story of Scripture, Pennington insightfully says, “...their goal of writing a continuing and consummating story is revealed through the way they have approached their task: the Gospels are written in the narrative form of most of the Jewish Scriptures, conscious of and clearly mimicking these stories, intertextually and figurally explaining the events of Jesus’s life as the goal and telos of the story of God.” See, Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 247.

⁸² Kevin Vanhoozer speaks of the church as the community of faith that continues the biblical story. To use his words, the church should “embody” the biblical story as it continues the mission of Jesus in the world. See, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There A Meaning in This Text: The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 431, Logos Bible Software.

⁸³ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 20.

⁸⁴ Bauckham notes, “A metanarrative is an attempt to tell a single story about the whole of human history in order to attribute a single and integrated meaning to the whole.” See, Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 87.

⁸⁵ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 55.

⁸⁶ Wright identifies the following metanarrative questions: “Where are we? Who are we? What’s gone wrong? What is the solution?” See, Wright, *The Mission of God*, 55. See also, Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 31.

“cognitive” outlook on life.⁸⁷ Issler’s terminology is helpful for thinking about worldview and metanarrative because it is illustrative of just how foundational worldview/metanarrative is. Leslie Newbigin uses the phrase “plausibility structure” in similar fashion to how Wright, Bartholomew and Goheen describe metanarrative/worldview. Plausibility structures are “patterns of belief and practice accepted within a given society, which determine which beliefs are plausible to its members and which are not.”⁸⁸ To say it another way, “plausibility structures” are beliefs by which one views and makes sense of the world—very similar to the function of metanarratives. A worldview (i.e. plausibility structure) provides a grid for determining the nature of “reality.”⁸⁹ Reading the Bible with a christological hermeneutic is foundational for discipleship because it opens one’s eyes to the larger storylines of Scripture which define reality in a very particular christocentric way.⁹⁰ In this way a metanarrative forms one’s worldview (i.e. their particular approach to how they view the world).⁹¹

In this discussion of worldview formation, it is important to make the distinction between one’s stated and actual worldview. The worldview by which one operates (i.e. the metanarrative they believe) is not necessarily their stated worldview/metanarrative.⁹²

⁸⁷ Klaus Dieter Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 28.

⁸⁸ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 8.

⁸⁹ This is the argument that Michael Lawrence makes in, Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 31.

⁹⁰ Regarding the foundational nature of worldviews, James Sire helpfully says, “Our worldview generally lies so deeply embedded in our subconscious that unless we have reflected long and hard, we are unaware of what it is.” See, James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 5th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 21.

⁹¹ Jeannine Brown argues that the “meta-story” of the Bible is what should shape the Christian’s worldview. She understands worldview to comprise “thinking, being, and doing.” See, Brown, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, 46.

⁹² Sire, *The Universe Next Door*, 284-285; Ronald J. Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience: Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 12–13.

For this reason it is better to speak of a metanarrative/worldview as the overarching story that is communicated through one's pattern of behavior (see Matthew 7:15-20). Someone could claim that their worldview is informed by a christological biblical metanarrative, but their life reflects some other value system contrary to the values and priorities taught by Jesus.⁹³ The goal of Christian formation is to bring one's life into conformity with a biblical worldview so that they "embody" a biblical metanarrative.⁹⁴ The worldview/metanarrative conversation is not just meant to be an academic exercise, it is to be lived out and put into practice.

Philosopher, James Smith, recognizes this reality that one's stated worldview is often not the worldview out of which they live. For this reason, Smith prefers "Christian social imaginary," because it is more holistic than a mere cognitive approach to worldview and metanarrative.⁹⁵ One needs to assess cultural practices (what he refers to as "liturgies") because one's actions (both individually and corporately) will betray one's perspective of what he terms the "good life."⁹⁶ In Smith's model, practices (what he refers to as "liturgies") form/shape an individual more than intellectual information.⁹⁷ According to Smith, this should cause us to rethink Christian education by approaching it from a more holistic perspective.⁹⁸ Smith's approach to worldview formation plays an important role in this project which will be highlighted below.

⁹³ Dallas Willard says that, "We always live up to our beliefs—or down to them, as the case may be." In other words, our actions will always reveal what we actually believe. See, Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperOne, 1997), 307–8.

⁹⁴ According to Vanhoozer, the church should "embody" the Scriptures by living them out. Vanhoozer, *Is There A Meaning in This Text: The Bible, The Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*, 431.

⁹⁵ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 133, Kindle.

⁹⁶ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 134.

⁹⁷ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 134.

⁹⁸ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 70.

Practical Considerations

As has already been mentioned, the Gospel of Matthew invites the reader into the larger narrative arc of the Bible by exposing the reader to various themes through intertextual connections. Because the Old Testament is foreign to many parishioners, I have designed a curriculum to introduce congregants to the ways Matthew uses the Old Testament. The small group curriculum inductively highlights some of the major themes (certainly not all) of the Old Testament by pointing out some of Matthew's quotations and allusions. The themes that I have chosen to highlight for the purposes of this project are: Jesus as the son of David and the son of Abraham, Jesus as the initiator of Israel's new exodus, Jesus as the anointed Son of God, Jesus as the Suffering Servant, and Jesus as the King over new creation. Each of these particular themes comprise one chapter of the small group curriculum. While many other themes could have been chosen, these themes are derived from an exegetical analysis of texts in Matthew and are not imposed upon the text (see the small group curriculum in appendix 5 for the exegetical analysis of the various themes).

I chose the texts that contain these themes because these themes are large enough to shape one's metanarrative. Timothy Keller in his groundbreaking theology of ministry, *Center Church*, outlines how the larger themes of the Bible can be tied to the Bible's major storyline (that of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration).⁹⁹ If Keller is correct, this means that the Matthean themes in the small group curriculum connect to the larger storyline of the Bible. Themes such as exodus, kingship, the Abrahamic and Davidic promises, etc. are all components of the larger scriptural drama. I do not intend to say that Matthew has the entire scriptural story in view when he introduces Jesus as the "son of Abraham" or the "son of David" (Matt 1:1). This would be to read too much into the text and to impose a metanarrative onto the text in Matthew. What I argue is that

⁹⁹ Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 43.

Matthew introduces themes like divine sonship (Matt 3:17) which can then be explored at the canonical level. When the intertexts are explored (e.g. Ps 2:7 and Is 42:1) one can ask questions such as: Why does Matthew choose these particular text/s? Is there a particular theme that Matthew is drawing out? How does Matthew's echo of Psalm 2:7 nuance the theme of kingship found in other parts of Scripture? Working from the text up allows Matthew to speak for himself rather than reading into Matthew what was never intended.

Ideally, the hope of any pastor is that biblical theology would inform the "core beliefs" of his parishioners. By doing biblical theology in community (such as a small group), congregants will indeed be intellectually challenged; but more importantly, the community provides the accountability to put biblical theology to practice. For this reason, each of the lessons in the small group curriculum designed for this project contain an application challenge to be implemented in the group. Smith's model that practices inform core beliefs provides the theoretical rationale for including practical application projects to implement.¹⁰⁰ Examples of application projects are journaling about particular questions, sharing the faith with one another person, laying down one's rights for another person, etc. These application challenges are an intentional effort to equip members to live out the biblical themes within the accountability context of the small group. The hope/goal is that by training participants to recognize how the Gospel of Matthew utilizes the Old Testament, group members will take the necessary steps to form a biblical theological foundation for whole-life discipleship.

Conclusion

This chapter began by arguing that intertextuality was Matthew's strategy for reading the Old Testament with a christological focus. It was then argued that intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew is an entryway for engaging a congregation in

¹⁰⁰ Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 134.

biblical theology—exploring the larger themes and storyline of the canon. The last section demonstrated that biblical theology is foundational for discipleship because it informs one's worldview. The small group curriculum produced for this project introduces congregants to the intertexts in Matthew with the goal of forming the biblical theological foundations for whole-life discipleship in the lives of parishioners. The next chapter will outline the nature of this project and how it was implemented within the context of Calvary Church.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of this project was to train Calvary Church small group members to understand how the four Gospels use the Old Testament to establish a biblical theological foundation for whole-life discipleship. There were four goals associated with this project. The first goal was to determine the ability of small group members to recognize the significance of the Gospels' use of the Old Testament. The second goal was to develop a five-week small group curriculum around intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew. The third goal was to write a three-session training course to introduce facilitators to the Gospels' use of the Old Testament, explain intertextuality's relevance for understanding Scripture's metanarrative, and equip them to lead the five-week small group curriculum. The final goal was to implement the facilitator training and small group curriculum to increase the ability of participants to recognize the significance of the Gospels' use of the Old Testament for establishing a biblical theological foundation for discipleship. These goals were accomplished in three major phases. During phase one I researched and wrote the small group curriculum and facilitator training. Phase two was the implementation period during which I led the leader training and small groups completed the curriculum. In phase three I interviewed the small group facilitators. This chapter will highlight these three phases in greater detail. These three phases (not including the formation of the expert panel and the invitation period) lasted a total of forty-two weeks.

Phase I: Invitation and Development

The first task of this project was to form the expert panel responsible for

reviewing the small group curriculum and facilitator training. The expert panel consisted of Calvary Church's White Bear Campus Pastor, Mike Graham, Calvary Church's Elder Board member, Jon Ochs, and the Director of Online Programs at Bethel Seminary, Dr. Jeannine Brown. By including two Calvary Church members in significant leadership roles (e.g. pastor and elder) my intention was to inform key leaders at Calvary Church of the details of this project. Brown is a New Testament scholar and an expert in the Gospel of Matthew. She reviewed the curriculum and training for biblical and theological accuracy. An email invitation was sent to Jon Ochs and Jeannine Brown on October 4, 2018.¹ I verbally invited Graham to be a member of the expert panel because I work closely with him on the pastoral staff.

After the formation of the expert panel I coordinated with the church calendar to determine the most effective time for the small group facilitator training. The original date for the training was scheduled for August 17 and 18, 2019. The date was moved to January 11 and 12, 2020 to accommodate for the time needed to develop and produce the curriculum and training materials. I later made the decision to reduce the training to three sessions on January 11, 2020 to foster greater participation in the project.²

After forming the expert panel and scheduling the training, I had initial conversations with small group facilitators in March of 2019. As the Discipleship Pastor of Calvary Church, I am responsible for the leadership and direction of thirty to thirty-five small groups. The goal was to secure commitments from at least six small groups to participate in this project. As part of my regular responsibilities I periodically visit groups to support, encourage, and get a pulse on the spiritual health of the facilitators and their groups. During these visits in the spring of 2019 I first mentioned the prospect of

¹ See appendix 8 for the emails that were used to invite Jon Ochs and Dr. Jeannine Brown to be part of the expert panel.

² This date change contributed to some confusion among small group members as the original invitation to the small group leaders contained the January 11 and 12 date.

participating in this project.³ The general response was very positive. I then sent an official email invitation to small group facilitators on April 9, 2019.⁴ I called the entire project (including the facilitator training and small group curriculum) “Experience the Gospel.”⁵ The goal was that participants would both experience reading the Gospel of Matthew with fresh eyes, and pursue the biblical-theological life application. Before sending this invitation out to small group facilitators, Pastor Mike Graham, Elder Board member, Jon Ochs, Calvary Church Communications Director, Cheryl Brunkow, and Ministry Assistant, Christa Granlund, reviewed the invitation for clarity.⁶

The initial invitation was followed by conversation with small group facilitators to clarify how they were to explain the project to their groups.⁷ If groups needed assistance in explaining the project to their members, I provided concise direction without revealing the key ideas of the project.⁸

On November 12, 2019 I sent a reminder email with details for the training. These details included the time and location of the training (January 11, 2020, 9:00AM-

³ It was during this time that the original date for the facilitator training was August 17 and 18, 2019. This date was later changed (in early April 2019) to January 11 and 12, 2020 to better accommodate the church calendar.

⁴ See appendix 7 for the email invitation that was sent to small group facilitators. The original version of this invitation included January 11 and 12, 2020 as the facilitator training dates. As was mentioned above, this training was modified to January 11, 2020 to increase commitment and participation.

⁵ Cheryl Brunkow, Calvary Church’s Communications Director, assisted in developing this title.

⁶ A total of thirteen small groups committed to participating in the project. Twenty small group facilitators attended the training on January 11, 2020, and there were approximately 128 participants in the small group curriculum.

⁷ I was cautious about how I described the project so as to not distort the survey results.

⁸ The following is a sample response for how I responded to the confusion of one of the small group facilitators: “The small group curriculum will look at some biblical theological themes in Matthew. Each week there is a very minimal amount of background reading to do prior to group and the group time will consist of reading a passage and working through discussion questions together. The general focus of this study is on how the Gospel of Matthew uses the Old Testament.” To another group that expressed confusion I said that the curriculum would focus on biblical and theological themes in the Gospel of Matthew. Another group wanted to know a general outline of the small group curriculum. I provided this group with the title for each of the chapters along with the format for the small group curriculum and the time commitment required.

12:00PM), the deadline to complete the small group curriculum (March 15, 2020),⁹ and information about the pre and post-survey that all facilitators and small group participants were encouraged to take. I sent another email on December 11, 2019 to reiterate the details of the previous email and request the total number of participants so that I could distribute the correct number of small group curriculums and surveys.¹⁰ The final email correspondence with small group facilitators was on January 9, 2020 to reiterate the time and place of the training and encourage all participants to bring a Bible for active participation in the group assignments.

I devoted the time between the initial conversations and the training on January 11, 2020 to developing the five-week small group curriculum and the three-session training course, and finalizing my expert panel evaluation rubrics and Gospel Fluency Survey for approval by my initial supervisor, Dr. Daniel Gurtner, and the Research Ethics Committee (time of development totaled twenty-six weeks). I submitted my research profile which included my evaluation rubrics and Gospel Fluency Survey on September 14, 2019. Gurtner approved my research profile on September 18, 2019 and the Research Ethics Committee issued final approval on September 20, 2019. The small group curriculum development period lasted from July 17, 2019 through August 30, 2019 (not including the time needed for design and editing).¹¹ I sent the curriculum to the expert panel for review on September 28, 2019. The final editing (incorporating the feedback from the expert panel) and design were completed by January 6, 2020. I developed the facilitator training course in October 2019 and sent the content to the expert panel on

⁹ This deadline was later extended to April 5, 2020 in order to accommodate groups that did not meet every week.

¹⁰ Because most small groups were comprised of married couples, all married couples were asked to share a curriculum in order to save printing costs. Every participant was to fill out an individual survey.

¹¹ See appendix 5 for the complete version of the small group curriculum developed for this project.

November 7, 2019.¹² The feedback from the expert panel informed the final preparation of the training course. Because the curriculum and the training are a large part of this project, I will outline the development process. The goal of the curriculum as stated in the introduction is as follows,

Through these five weeks, the hope is that this curriculum will train you to recognize the way Matthew (and by extension the other Gospel writers) uses the Old Testament and why this is important and relevant for discipleship.¹³

R.T. France argues that “The opening of the book thus sets the tone for Matthew’s whole gospel.”¹⁴ Because this project was limited to five sessions, I determined to focus the curriculum on the first three chapters of Matthew where he introduces many christological themes. Weeks one through three focus on the following passages: Matthew 1:1-17; Matthew 2:1-18; and Matthew 3:1-17. With each passage I introduced a different christological theme (e.g. Jesus as the son of David and the son of Abraham, Israel’s new exodus, and Jesus as the anointed Son of God).¹⁵ Because Matthew includes a large number of Old Testament references associated with Jesus’ passion, week four of the curriculum focuses on Matthew 27:11-56.¹⁶ The final week closes with Matthew 28:16-20 to put the proverbial explanation point on the discipleship focus of the curriculum.

Each week the curriculum included a background reading to orient the small group participant to the particular theme addressed in the passage. The background

¹² See appendix 6 for the complete version of the teaching notes used for the small group facilitator training.

¹³ Tucker Anderson, *Treasures Old and New: The Story of the Bible in the Gospel of Matthew* (Roseville, MN: Calvary Church, 2020), 6.

¹⁴ R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 10, Logos Bible Software.

¹⁵ Anderson, *Treasures Old and New*, 6.

¹⁶ Craig Blomberg highlights the reality of Matthew bookending his Gospel with a high volume of Old Testament references. See, Craig Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids; Nottingham: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 97, Logos Bible Software.

reading was followed by two small group questions (“Opening Questions”) designed to help small groups begin a conversation related to the theme of the biblical text (the questions were not directly related to the biblical text). After the initial questions, group members were asked to read a selection from the Old Testament and a selection from the Gospel of Matthew. The Old Testament passages were either directly quoted in the Gospel of Matthew or alluded to through subtle echoes. After reading the biblical text, the curriculum walked the small group through six inductive Bible study questions (“Explore” questions). These questions asked the group to reflect on why Matthew used the Old Testament and what this teaches about Jesus. After the “Explore” questions, the curriculum included four application questions (“Apply” questions). These questions challenged participants to consider how Matthew’s use of the Old Testament has practical implications for their lives. Each week I included an “Application Reflection” which afforded the space to provide my own comments and reflection. This was followed by an “Application Challenge.” Because the goal was that this curriculum would bring about life change, it asked groups to engage in some practical activity related to the theme for the week. Each week ended with the section, “For Further Study.” I provided a video from the “Bible Project” illustrating a major theme from the lesson, or I suggested a book accessible to a lay audience for those who want to discover the topic in greater detail.

Now that I have outlined the curriculum, I will provide an overview of its content. In the introduction of the curriculum I highlighted three purposes of the Gospels: the Gospels are a continuation of the biblical story, the Gospels teach us how to read the Bible, and the Gospels form us as disciples. The goal of the introduction was to orient the reader to the overarching story of Scripture, and the ways the Gospels invite the reader into the larger story through intertextual connections. In order to make this curriculum accessible to a lay audience I used the word “echoes” as synonymous with intertext and allusions.

Week one focused on Jesus’ connection to David and Abraham. I introduced

the curriculum with this theme because this is where Matthew begins his Gospel (Matt 1:1). Matthew 1:1 provides the opportunity to introduce Jesus as the completion of the biblical story—Abraham and David are perhaps the two most significant Old Testament figures and the pillars of the Bible’s metanarrative. The focal passages of the first study were Genesis 12:1-13 (God’s promise to Abraham), 2 Samuel 7:13-16 (God’s promise to David), and Matthew 1:1-17. The goal of the first lesson was to help participants see and understand the larger story of Scripture and to help them reflect upon the stories guiding and shaping their lives.

Week two introduced the exodus theme to readers by focusing on Matthew’s use of Hosea 11:1 and Jeremiah 31:15 quoted in Matthew 2:15 and Matthew 2:17 respectively. I argued in the background reading that this was Matthew’s way of introducing the idea that Jesus was instituting a new exodus. In week two I presented the idea of Jesus’ fulfillment of patterns and themes in the Old Testament. I preferred these terms over “typology” to make the curriculum more accessible to the congregation. The primary passages of study were Micah 5:2-4, Jeremiah 31, Hosea 11, and Matthew 2:1-18. The goal of the second session was to help participants see that they are spiritually exiled in need of the new exodus that Jesus provides.

Week three focused on the themes in the baptism of Jesus. This session introduced participants to the Isaianic themes of new creation and the reign of God. Particular focus was given to Isaiah 40. In this session I argued that John anointed Jesus as the Son of God and the one who was to inaugurate the kingdom of God and new creation. The primary passages of focus were Isaiah 40:3; 42:1, Psalm 2:7 and Matthew 3:1-17. The aforementioned OT passages are echoed at Jesus’ baptism. The goal of week three was for participants to reflect upon what it means that Jesus is the inaugurated King and the implications that this has on every aspect of life.

Week four took a different angle than the previous weeks. After introducing the suffering servant figure in Isaiah, I included the full text of Matthew 27:11-56 and

underscored the intertextual connections with various Old Testament passages, mostly from Isaiah and the Psalms. By highlighting these intertexts, my goal was to help readers see how Matthew seamlessly weaves Jesus' story into the tapestry of the Old Testament. The primary goal of the application section was to show that the suffering servant figure adds depth and nuance to Jesus' suffering and crucifixion. I also intended to show how suffering is central to a kingdom ethic.

Week five focused on the Great Commission (Matt 28:16-20). In the background reading I argued that Matthew includes several intertextual connections with Daniel 7:13-14. The primary texts used in the discussion section were Daniel 7:1-28 and Matthew 28:16-20. Understanding the Danielic intertext in the Great Commission adds depth and richness to Jesus' role and authority in discipling. The primary goal in the application section was to show that Jesus' universal authority gives us encouragement and confidence in the discipling process.

The training course (taught on January 11, 2020) consisted of three sessions. Session one was titled "The Transforming Power of Story." The goal of session one was to introduce participants to the concepts of worldview, metanarrative, and the larger biblical storyline. To help illustrate these larger ideas, I developed two group activities. The opening session asked participants to introduce themselves in small groups. This was to illustrate that we often introduce ourselves to others in the form of a story. The opening session also included a picture of the World Trade Center Memorial and asked for participants to share the story that comes to mind when viewing the picture. The first session introduced the idea of "core beliefs" and argued that this is the level where transformation occurs.¹⁷ Session one concluded by introducing the concept of metanarrative—the story which informs core beliefs.

¹⁷ Klaus Dieter Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 28, 35.

The title of session two was, “The Gospel of Matthew and Biblical Theology.” The goal of this session was to introduce the concept that Matthew teaches his readers the larger storyline of the Bible through the way he uses the Old Testament—in other words, Matthew does biblical theology. Five major ideas were introduced to provide a hermeneutical tool for readers to understand Matthew’s use of the Old Testament: Old Testament Thought World, Quotation and Echo, Larger Context, Canonical Story, and “Reading Backwards”¹⁸ (for a complete description of each of these ideas, see the instructor guide in appendix 6). Included in session two was a case study on Matthew 3:13-17 instructing participants to work through the five hermeneutical principles above.

In session three, “Biblical Theology and Worldview Formation,” I demonstrated how biblical theology (session two) connects with worldview formation (session one). Session three argued that Matthew taught the large metanarrative one is to believe about the world. To illustrate this, I developed a worksheet on Matthew 21:1-11 for participants to complete by utilizing the five criteria introduced in session two. The training curriculum concluded by having participants discuss how the worldview described in the biblical passage confronts dominant worldviews in their present culture. This was accomplished by asking participants to answer the following worldview questions based on exegetical work done on Matthew 21:1-11. The worldview questions utilized were developed by Timothy Keller in his work, *Every Good Endeavor*: “How are things supposed to be? What is the main problem with things as they are? What is the solution and how can it be realized?”¹⁹

Because the Gospel Fluency Survey (GFS) was the primary instrumentation developed to gather qualitative data for this project, it deserves special attention. The goal

¹⁸ Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 104.

¹⁹ Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God’s Work* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 160.

of the GFS was to determine the degree to which the fourth goal of this project was achieved.²⁰ Questions one through seven gathered basic data and Bible reading habits of participants. I designed questions eight through twenty-two to focus on intertextuality in the Gospels. Questions twenty-three through thirty-four focused on metanarrative/worldview. Within each section, I designed questions to assess the participant's understanding and practice. The ideological questions assessed the participant's beliefs about how the Gospels use the Old Testament and their understanding of metanarrative. The questions that focused on practice assessed one's Bible reading/study habits (see the footnote for a breakdown of the individual questions).²¹ By structuring the survey in this way, a statistically significant difference between the pre and post-surveys would suggest that the final goal of this project was achieved.

Phase II: Implementation

Phase two was the implementation phase of the project. The implementation phase was divided into two stages. In the first stage, I conducted the training on January 11, 2020. During the second stage of phase two, small groups piloted the curriculum. Small groups had from January 11, 2020 until April 5, 2020 (twelve weeks) to implement the curriculum. In this section I will outline these stages of the implementation phase in greater detail.

²⁰ The final goal was to implement the facilitator training and small group curriculum on the Gospel of Matthew to increase the ability of participants to recognize the significance of the Gospels' use of the Old Testament for establishing a biblical theological foundation for discipleship.

²¹ The breakdown for the questions used in the GFS are as follows. The questions that focused on one's understanding of intertextuality are questions 8, 9, 10, 12, 17, 18, 20, 21. The questions that focused on one's practice of reading the Gospels with intertextuality in mind are questions 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22. The questions that assessed one's understanding of metanarrative are questions 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 32. The questions that focused on the participant's practice associated with metanarrative are questions 26, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34.

Stage 1

Twenty small group facilitators attended the training on January 11, 2020 (9:00AM to 12:00PM) representing thirteen of Calvary Church's small groups (approximately 128 total participants if all small group members are included). The true sample population for this project was fifty-six participants. This number was determined by the number of corresponding pre and post-surveys received. Ten small groups were from the Roseville campus and three small groups were from the White Bear Township campus. There was a wide demographic range among those who participated. Four groups were senior adult groups, four groups were intergenerational groups, four groups were young married groups and one group was a mix of young singles and married couples.

As small group facilitators arrived at the training, they received a folder containing the pre and post-surveys for every member of their group. Also included in this folder were two additional folders that were marked pre-survey and post-survey. Facilitators were to collect the pre-surveys and post-surveys and place them in the corresponding folders so that the pre and post-surveys would not be mixed. After beginning the training with prayer, I administered the GFS to the small group facilitators in attendance. This approach differs from what I discussed in my goals. I decided to administer the survey to the facilitators at the training for three reasons. First, I could explain the directions and ensure facilitators correctly explain the process to their groups. Second, I received a better completion rate than if I were to ask facilitators to take the survey prior to the training. Finally, this approach allowed for easier distribution of the surveys to all of the group members. I asked two facilitators to abstain from completing the survey (one facilitator serves on staff at Calvary Church and was involved in editing the small group curriculum, the other facilitator was a member of the expert panel). Because of their involvement in the development of the survey, I did not want to impact the results due to their connection with the project's development. After administering

the survey, I outlined the directions for how the facilitators were to administer the surveys to their small groups. The directions were as follows: every member was to complete a survey prior to going through the curriculum, participants were to create a numeric code so that all surveys would remain confidential and that pre and post-surveys could be matched, surveys could be completed with an open Bible, all survey questions needed to be answered in order for the survey to be used, pre-surveys were to be placed in the proper envelope and returned to me, and post-surveys were to be placed in the proper envelope and returned to me. The curriculum and post-survey were to be completed by April 5, 2020.²² Finally, I communicated that I would be connecting with each facilitator during the month of April for the follow-up interview.

After explaining the directions, I taught the three sessions. The teaching time was divided between lecture, large group discussion, small group discussion, group activity, and videos produced by the “Bible Project.” The variety of formats engaged differing learning styles. All facilitators received lecture outline handouts, as well as a worksheet on Matthew 21:1-11.

At the conclusion of the facilitator training, I distributed a copy of the small group curriculum, *Treasures Old and New: The Story of the Bible in the Gospel of Matthew*, to every participant. Facilitators distributed the curriculum to their group members at their next small group meeting. I sent an email to all participants immediately after the training on January 11, 2020. This email included a PDF version of the curriculum and a reiteration of the directions for administering the survey. Two small groups needed an electronic version of the survey and so I also provided a digital version of the GFS to accommodate new members that were added to groups.

²² This date was moved from the original deadline of March 15, 2020 in order to accommodate groups that met less frequently.

Stage 2

During the second stage of the implementation phase, small group facilitators administered the survey in their small groups and implemented the curriculum. I did not lead a small group through this curriculum so as not to impact survey results. In order to stay in contact with groups during this period I corresponded regularly through email to maintain a virtual presence, answer any logistical questions, and remind about the April 5, 2020 deadline. I sent these check-in emails on January 28, 2020 and February 21, 2020. On March 7, 2020 I sent a final email to begin the process of scheduling interviews with each of the small group facilitators.

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, I made the decision in consultation with my supervisor to shorten the length of my project. I permitted groups to complete the post-survey if participants had completed at least three sessions of the curriculum. I sent an email to all of the groups on March 14, 2020 to assess the number of sessions each group had completed. Eight of the small groups had finished all five sessions,²³ three groups finished four sessions, and two groups completed three sessions. Due to restrictions brought about by the pandemic, many of the groups finished the remaining sessions through a digital meeting format. I sent a follow up email on March 17, 2020 to describe the process of bringing the project to completion. Because Calvary Church urged groups to refrain from in-person gathering, collecting hard copies of the surveys was not feasible. I created a digital version of the survey for groups to complete. This would allow me to collect the anonymous surveys directly from participants rather than ask facilitators to arrange a time to collect the surveys. I closed the survey for receiving responses on April 11, 2020.

²³ Three of these eight groups completed session five as individuals but did not discuss as a group.

Phase III: Facilitator Interviews

The third phase of the project consisted of interviewing the small group facilitators (totaling 6 weeks).²⁴ I conducted a total of fourteen interviews from March 18, 2020 through April 28, 2020. All of the small group facilitators participated in the interview process. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I utilized a virtual platform for completing these interviews. The goal of the interview process was threefold. First, I sought to gather feedback on the facilitator training course and the small group curriculum. Second, I asked facilitators about the general attendance of their small group members. Calvary Church does not have a practice of taking attendance at small group gatherings. The interview process allowed me to ascertain a general sense of small group participation in the project.²⁵ The final goal of these interviews was to learn if the facilitators and group members would continue to read the Bible with an eye toward how the Gospel writers use the Old Testament. In chapter five I analyze and incorporate the qualitative feedback gathered from these interviews as part of the overall project assessment.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to train Calvary Church small group members to understand how the four Gospels use the Old Testament to establish a biblical theological foundation for whole-life discipleship. The four goals associated with this project were divided into three phases. As described above I devoted phase one to recruitment and development of the curriculum and training materials. The development of the small group curriculum and the facilitator training course took a total of twenty-six weeks. The focus of the facilitator training was on introducing participants to the

²⁴ See appendix 4 for the questions used in the interviews.

²⁵ My supervisor suggested that I not ask for specific attendance from individual group members as this can be off-putting to adult learners.

concepts of worldview and biblical theology. The five session small group curriculum, *Treasures Old and New: The Story of the Bible in the Gospel of Matthew*, highlighted that understanding Matthew's intertextual connections is a doorway into biblical theology. Phase two was the implementation phase which began with the teaching of the facilitator training on January 11, 2020. Small Groups had until April 5, 2020, to complete the small group curriculum. The implementation phase lasted twelve weeks. Twenty small group facilitators attended the training and a total of thirteen small groups participated in the project. I gathered quantitative feedback by administering the GFS prior to the training and curriculum and after its completion. During the final phase I conducted fourteen interviews with the facilitators between March 18, 2020, and April 28, 2020 (six weeks). The total length of time of this project lasted forty-two weeks.²⁶ The sample size—fifty-six—of this study was determined by the number of corresponding pre and post-Gospel Fluency Surveys. In the next chapter I will assess the effectiveness of this project and whether or not it accomplished the overall purpose by analyzing the GFS results and facilitator interview responses.

²⁶ The implementation and interview periods overlapped by two weeks.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

In the final chapter I will first assess the degree to which I accomplished the purpose and goals of this project. Second, I will underscore the key qualitative findings from the fourteen facilitator interviews conducted. Finally, I will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project, determine what I would do differently if I were to conduct this project again, and share my theological and personal reflections.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project as stated in chapter one was to train Calvary Church small group members to understand how the four Gospels use the Old Testament to establish a biblical theological foundation for whole-life discipleship. To better evaluate whether or not this purpose was accomplished, I will divide this statement into three components. The first aspect of the project's purpose was to train small group members to understand how the Gospels use the Old Testament. The second facet of the purpose was to train participants to link intertextual connections to biblical theology. The final element was to help participants connect biblical theology to whole-life discipleship (as I highlighted in chapter three, biblical theology is essential to discipleship because it forms one's worldview). This chapter will show that this project's purpose was only partially fulfilled.

The quantitative and qualitative data I gathered show that participants grew in their ability to identify how Matthew uses the Old Testament and to recognize the significance of worldview for discipleship. The data however does not demonstrate that participants grew in their ability to connect Matthew's use of the Old Testament with the

larger concept of biblical theology and worldview formation. I will elaborate upon the nuances of this data in the next section.

Evaluation of the Project's Goals

The first goal of the project was to determine the ability of small group members to recognize the significance of the Gospels' use of the Old Testament for establishing a biblical theological foundation for discipleship. Successful completion of this goal required six small group facilitators and eighty percent of their small groups to complete the GFS prior to participating in the training and curriculum. A total of thirteen small groups participated in the project and I received a total of 116 pre-Gospel Fluency Surveys. With approximately 128 small group members, a ninety-one percent participation rate in the pre-survey means that the first goal was accomplished.

The first seven questions of the GFS determined the Bible reading habits and biblical education background of participants. Those who read their Bible one hour or less in a typical week make up 64.29 percent of the fifty-six participants. Among these participants, 44.64 percent read less than one hour, and 3.57 percent do not read the Bible at all. While 37.5 percent of participants devote one hour or more of study¹ to the Bible in a typical week, 28.57 percent said that they do not study the Bible at all and 33.93 percent study less than one hour per week. Those who have read through the Old Testament at least once make up 64.29 percent of participants, while not surprisingly a greater number, 69.64 percent, have read the entire New Testament at least once. Thirty-one out of the fifty-six participants have had formal Bible training in a high school or post-secondary setting. Finally, only thirteen of the participants said that their small group has studied one of the Gospels in the past year.

The second goal was to develop a five-week small group curriculum around

¹ As mentioned in the GFS, studying means giving focused thought, consulting other resources, or writing about a passage of Scripture.

intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew. This goal was considered successfully met if ninety percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level. Two of the expert panel members scored the entire curriculum as a whole and not by individual chapters. These two expert panel members scored the curriculum one-hundred percent. The third expert panel member scored the introduction through chapter five on individual rubric forms. He scored each category for every chapter as either sufficient or exemplary. Because one-hundred percent of the evaluation criterion met the sufficient level the second goal of this project was met.

The third goal of this project was to develop a three-session training course to introduce facilitators to the Gospels' use of the Old Testament, explain intertextuality's relevance for whole-life discipleship, and equip them to lead the five-week small group curriculum. Like with the second goal, a minimum of ninety percent of the evaluation criteria had to meet the sufficient level. Two of the expert panel members scored one hundred percent of the categories as sufficient or exemplary. The third expert panel member scored all but one of the categories as sufficient or exemplary. For lesson two, one of the expert panel members suggested that the language/concepts used in the lesson should be modified to make them more accessible for the audience. Because ninety percent of the material met the sufficient level the third goal was considered successfully met.

The final goal was to implement the facilitator training and small group curriculum on the Gospel of Matthew to increase the ability of participants to recognize the significance of the Gospels' use of the Old Testament for establishing a biblical theological foundation for whole-life discipleship. The goal was to be considered successfully met if the t-test for the dependent samples yielded a positive statistically significant difference between the pre and post-surveys.

Five different t-tests for dependent samples were conducted to analyze the results from the pre and post-GFS. There was a statistically significant difference ($t_{(55)} =$

5.054, $p < .0001$) when analyzing data from the entire GFS. As was mentioned in chapter four, the GFS analyzed four different realities: intertextuality (understanding), intertextuality (practice), metanarrative (understanding), and metanarrative (practice). There was a statistically significant difference when analyzing one's practice of recognizing intertexts in the Gospel of Matthew ($t_{(55)} = 5.030$, $p < .0001$). When assessing one's understanding of metanarrative there was a statistically significant difference ($t_{(55)} = 4.053$, $p < .0001$). The t-test also showed a statistically significant difference when analyzing one's practices related to worldview/metanarrative ($t_{(55)} = 5.525$, $p < .0001$). When analyzing the results solely for one's understanding of intertextuality there was not a statistically significant difference ($t_{(55)} = .509$, $p = .306$). In summary there was a statistically significant difference for one's practice of identifying intertexts in the Gospel of Matthew, one's understanding and practical outworking of metanarrative, and the entire GFS. There was no statistically significant difference when assessing one's understanding of the concepts of intertextuality. For this last category, the questions on the survey asked participants about Jesus' relationship with the Old Testament and whether or not one could understand Jesus' person and ministry apart from understanding the Old Testament. That there was no statistically significant difference in this category shows that participants did not grow in their understanding of intertextuality as it relates to biblical theology (the ability to recognize the significance of intertextual connections).

Feedback from Facilitator Interviews

In addition to gathering quantitative data I conducted fourteen interviews with small group facilitators (for the purposes of this project all facilitator names are held confidential and any citations will maintain confidentiality). The goals of the interview process were to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the facilitator training, and small group curriculum, determine the attendance of the groups, and ascertain whether or not one will continue to read the Gospels with an eye toward how they use the Old

Testament.² The following review will underline the common themes that emerged during these interviews.

Training course feedback. Although many facilitators found the training course to be beneficial for understanding worldview and biblical theology, these same facilitators found the amount of material to be overwhelming. The concepts of worldview and biblical theology were new to some and it is possible that this was a contributing factor to the overwhelming nature of the content. Many of the facilitators recommended that I either decrease the amount of content or increase the amount of time to cover the material. My teaching style was also critiqued. During one of the interviews, a facilitator noted that I was inconsistent in my use of terminology when teaching on worldview. In addition to the term “worldview” I also used terms like “core belief”³ and metanarrative. If I conduct this training in the future, I will employ one term for larger concepts instead of introducing new vocabulary.

Small group curriculum feedback. Feedback regarding the curriculum was diverse. A common theme that arose was that the background reading (the introduction, and weekly reading prior to the questions) well-articulated the concepts and oriented participants to the topic. One small group facilitator who leads an intergenerational group said that the first session produced one of the best conversations they have had as a small group. Another facilitator who leads a young families small group commented on the fruitfulness of the discussion each week. A common theme that arose during the interview process was that the curriculum was challenging and demanding. One senior adult small group facilitator—a seasoned Christian—said that she has not read the Old

² The complete list of interview questions can be found in appendix four.

³ Klaus Dieter Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 28.

and New Testaments as interconnected as I described in the curriculum. The curriculum provided her with new insights. Another young adult facilitator commented that the group found the curriculum to be challenging and produced good discussion because the questions did not have simple or obvious answers.

Although the curriculum did receive positive feedback, there was no shortage of critique. Some facilitators critiqued the structure. For some the curriculum would have been more effective if more sessions were added. The conclusion was that the curriculum contained too much content for a small group discussion. Another common critique was that some of the questions were difficult to answer because they were multilayered. One facilitator noted that I often combine multiple questions into a single question.

In addition to some of the structural changes proposed, some facilitators objected to the approach of the curriculum. One theme that arose from multiple facilitators was that the curriculum was too academic and did not contribute to the spiritual development and/or life application of the participants. One facilitator suggested that I incorporate the application questions into the interpretation section to keep application at the forefront of each session. A few facilitators also took issue with some of the echoes proposed in the curriculum as they were unconvinced by some of the implied answers.

Group attendance. Attendance keeping is not part of the regular rhythm of small group life at Calvary Church. Instead of keeping attendance, my initial supervisor suggested that I include an interview question asking facilitators to describe the overall attendance for their group. I will review how the facilitators described their attendance and how many sessions of the curriculum each group completed. Group one said that their attendance was one-hundred percent with the exception of one couple's absence for one of the sessions. For the other sessions at least one representative of each couple was present for each meeting. Group one finished all five sessions. Group two had complete

participation from four out of the five couples in their group. This group finished four sessions. Group three has nine people in their group and averaged seven/eight people each week. For one of the sessions they had all nine participants in attendance. Group three finished three of the sessions as the group did not want to finish the curriculum. In group four, one couple missed one session, otherwise all couples were present at all five sessions. Group five is comprised of senior adults and averaged seven/eight out of eleven participants each week. Some group members travel south for the winter resulting in lower attendance. The group finished four sessions. Group six completed three sessions and had at least four out of six participants at each meeting. Group seven completed four sessions and had one-hundred percent attendance with the exception of one week when one participant was absent. Group eight's facilitator said the group had a core of three couples. These core couples attended at least four out of the five sessions (each couple missed only one session). Group eight finished all five sessions. Group nine had fourteen people and had one-hundred percent attendance. This group finished through session four together and completed session five individually. Group ten finished one-hundred percent of the curriculum; however, when a couple missed a session, they completed the session on their own. Group ten finished all five sessions. Group eleven completed all five sessions together. Three out of the four weeks everyone was present. One couple missed two weeks and one family missed one week. Group twelve completed four sessions. The facilitators described their attendance as having eighty percent attendance for each session. Group thirteen finished all five sessions. This group had three couples and describe one or two occasions when a spouse was not able to attend.

Because the survey did not assess each individual session but rather the larger concepts of the curriculum, missing one or even two sessions should not have had a significant impact on the results. For this reason, attendance does not play a significant factor in interpreting the pre and post-survey.

Strengths of the Project

I have identified four strengths of this project which I will describe in detail: participation, diversity (age, campus and gender) of the participants, content development, and the expert panel. This project had good participation with thirteen of Calvary Church's roughly thirty small groups involved. During the interview process, many facilitators noted that their group members seriously engaged the curriculum by completing their homework prior the group session. These facilitators also said that group members had serious discussion about the curriculum's content and questions. Engagement with the curriculum crossed generational lines as young adult and/or young married groups through senior adult groups had a high level of engagement and participation in the project.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, both campuses were represented (ten small groups from Roseville and three small groups from White Bear Township). There was also a diversity of ages. Four groups were senior adult groups, four groups were intergenerational, four groups were comprised of young married couples and one group was comprised of young singles and married couples. This diversity resulted in cross-generational data which is reflective of Calvary Church's demographics.

This project afforded the opportunity to design a small group curriculum and facilitator training that will serve as a valuable ongoing discipleship tool. There is great value in the church developing its own curriculum for its parishioners because the local pastor knows his congregation, the issues that they are facing, and the questions that will engage his members. By developing content for this project, I was able to make connections and utilize language that would reinforce theological themes and practical concepts that the church was already pursuing. Week four of the curriculum is a good example of tailoring the curriculum to Calvary Church's specific needs. The Application Reflection section says,

The crucifixion models kingdom values. At the center of this kingdom is a cross with a crucified and mocked King. Jesus' kingdom is a radically different kingdom

than the kingdoms of our world which often showcase their military power or political prowess (Matt 5-7; 20:20-28). And yet we who call ourselves followers of Jesus often jockey for power in our families and workplaces. We place our trust in politicians who make promises of lasting change often at the expense of others. We try to solve problems using the principles of this world, rather than the values of the kingdom. Reflect upon your own life. Where is your life more in line with the values of earthly “kingdoms” rather than the values of the kingdom of the Crucified?⁴

Certainly, the theological themes and application principles could translate to another church or context, but the language I chose specifically reflected issues Calvary Church has addressed during my time as Discipleship Pastor. For instance, we often speak about kingdom values, and we emphasize living as whole-life disciples of Jesus in our families and workplaces. By utilizing this language, my goal was to help parishioners make connections between the crucifixion of Jesus and the other discipleship themes which Calvary Church has prioritized.

Another strength of this project was the expert panel. As was mentioned in chapters one and four, the expert panel consisted of a pastoral staff member, an elder board member, and a New Testament professor at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Each expert panel member provided valuable feedback from a unique perspective. The elder board member assessed the curriculum from the vantage point of a lay member. He was able to highlight language that was too technical or concepts that needed clarification. The pastoral representative analyzed the curriculum from a trained discipleship perspective. The professor assessed the curriculum for biblical and theological accuracy. This combination of panel members—each bringing a unique skill-set—assisted in the development of a more effective curriculum toward accomplishing the overall purpose of this project.

Weaknesses of the Project

There were three weaknesses of this project worth noting. First, there was

⁴ Tucker Anderson, *Treasures Old and New: The Story of the Bible in the Gospel of Matthew* (Roseville, MN: Calvary Church, 2020), 35.

inconsistency in the way I communicated the role of attendance. At the facilitator training I verbalized that I would not be keeping attendance and that this would not be a factor in the project. In the final email correspondence with small group facilitators, I said that groups could take the survey if the group had completed three sessions. In addition to this inconsistency, there was not a system for determining the attendance of group members and consequently no way of knowing which sessions participants completed. As I already noted, it does not appear that attendance played a significant factor in this project based on the facilitator interviews; however, it would have been beneficial to have a precise means of gathering attendance data that would not be off-putting to adult learners as my initial supervisor cautioned.

More than one facilitator mentioned the lack of life application during the facilitator interview process. Some facilitators perceived the “Apply” questions and the “Application Challenge” as afterthoughts. At least five of the small groups felt that the curriculum was too academic or did not have enough of a focus on life application. I will devote more time to assessing application in the “Theological Reflections” section below; but suffice it to say, application could have played a more significant role in this project.

Because the t-stat did not yield a statistically significant difference when assessing one’s understanding of intertextuality, I have concluded that the project did not adequately address the *meaning* of biblical intertexts. There is a difference between merely recognizing intertexts and identifying the significance of the New Testament’s use of the Old Testament. An inability to identify the *significance* of the intertexts may have been a contributing factor to the feedback that the curriculum emphasized an academic reading over reading for application. More emphasis should have been placed on intertextual significance and its relevance for understanding biblical theology and the formation of worldview.

What I Would Do Differently

In this section I will address proposed modifications to attendance, application, training, and leader development. As was already mentioned, attendance did not appear to be a significant factor in this project; however, if I were to conduct this project again, I would incorporate a question into the post-GFS asking participants to note which curriculum sessions they completed. This would provide more precise information regarding participation without asking for facilitators to take attendance at each session.

There are three practical considerations that would help address the concern that the curriculum lacked an emphasis on application. First, instead of having a separate section for application, I would take the recommendation raised in the facilitator interviews to incorporate the application questions into the interpretation section. With the current format, groups often skipped the application questions when pressed for time. By incorporating the application questions in this way, participants would discuss practical application throughout the curriculum instead of waiting until the end of the session. Another practical consideration to help foster a greater emphasis on application would be to incorporate a video each week highlighting the goal of the lesson and applications to consider. Including this video at the front-end of the session would frame the entire discussion around the overall goal of life application. Weaving application into the larger tapestry of each session would address the larger goal of this project of helping congregants recognize the significance of how the Gospel writers utilize the Old Testament for discipleship.

One of the recurring themes during the facilitator interviews was the difficulty/complexity of the questions. Facilitators did not always express confidence that the group had correctly answered the questions or accomplished the overall goal of each lesson. One facilitator suggested that I develop a companion leader guide for the curriculum. A leader guide could incorporate answers to the questions, resources for further study, suggestions for leading discussion, and the goals of each session.

Overall the feedback on the facilitator training was very positive. Participants found the information to be valuable and enriching. If I were to conduct this project in the future, I would extend the invitation to all small group participants to be part of the project rather than limit the training to the facilitators. The biblical and theological foundations discussed in the training would lay the theological groundwork for all participants prior to the curriculum. This would potentially provide the opportunity to develop new leaders.

Theological Reflections

This project raised three important theological matters related to discipleship in the local church. In this section I will discuss the role of the Spirit in discipleship, the definition and understanding of application, and the role of the Gospels in the life of the local church.

Role of the Spirit in Discipleship

During one of the facilitator interviews, a facilitator commented by saying,

I think the big fulfillment things are important to understand, but...be a little careful about saying well, this is all something man can do...that if we really study the Old Testament then the New Testament will come alive to us. It might not if that is not where the Holy Spirit is digging in our hearts.⁵

The comments by this facilitator raise an important question about the role of the Holy Spirit in interpreting Scripture. First, there is a difference in saying that understanding the Old Testament helps us understand the New Testament and saying that the New Testament helps us correctly understand the Old Testament (although both are true). It appears that this particular facilitator interpreted the thesis of this curriculum as understanding the Old Testament in order to understand the New Testament. In fact, as stated in the introduction of the curriculum, the goal of this curriculum was exactly the

⁵ Interview with Calvary Church Small Group Facilitator, April 7, 2020.

opposite—to show that the Gospels “give us the lens to read the Scriptures rightly.”⁶ This is an important distinction. I was not arguing that if someone has just enough knowledge of the Old Testament then the New Testament will become intelligible. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures (Luke 24:13-34); however, they did not rightly understand their sacred writings until Jesus “opened” the Scriptures (Luke 24:32). Similarly, the eleven disciples did not understand the Scriptures until Jesus “opened their minds” (Luke 24:45). As I argue in chapter two, the Gospel writers engage in this same hermeneutic and teach the church how to read the Hebrew Scriptures christologically (i.e. correctly). Jonathan Pennington’s articulation of the Gospels as a *regula fidei* (“rule of faith”) is fitting.⁷ The Gospels calibrate our understanding and reading of the Old Testament.

This is not to deny the role of the Holy Spirit in understanding the Scriptures. In chapter two I noted that the Lord “opens” the heart of Lydia to understand Paul’s preaching. At one level, one can “understand” the Scriptures apart from the Holy Spirit. Certainly, biblical scholarship is not performed only by those who profess faith in Jesus Christ. At another level, a Lydia-like scriptural understanding can only be accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit. This is similar to what Keven Vanhoozer argues:

The Spirit awakens us to life in the new reality in Christ, to the story of what the Triune God has done, is doing, and will do in Jesus Christ. It is this story that sings not our feet but our hearts, like those of the two disciples on the Emmaus road...⁸

A mere intellectual understanding does not require the Spirit’s assistance; however, the kind of understanding described in Luke 24—articulated by Vanhoozer and pursued by this project—requires the work of the Spirit.

⁶ Anderson, *Treasures Old and New*, 4.

⁷ Regarding the Gospels being the church’s rule of faith, Pennington says, “The fourfold witness of the Gospels provides the guiding principle (even *regula fidei*) and lodestar for understanding and standing under all of Holy Scripture.” See, Jonathan T. Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 231.

⁸ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers: A Pastor’s Guide to Making Disciples through Scripture and Doctrine* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 55, Logos Bible Software.

Application and Spiritual Formation

As I mentioned above, one of the primary critiques of the curriculum was that it was too academic. I clarified what was meant by the term academic with one particular facilitator. He responded, “scholarship is not the same as spiritual insight,” and “a large percentage of the content was in demonstrating the connections between the Old Testament and the New Testament without necessarily helping people enrich their understanding of the Gospel.”⁹ This facilitator also said, “What is the Bible for? It is spiritual food. The pastoral concern always goes for that.”¹⁰ As the Discipleship Pastor, one of my main responsibilities is to teach the Bible and develop systems and strategies for effective Bible study at Calvary Church. This facilitator’s comments raised the important issue about the relationship between study and spiritual formation. Instead of an either/or approach to study and spiritual formation, a holistic perspective places emphasis on both. The believer should be growing in intellectual knowledge, but he or she should also be growing in wisdom—the desire and ability to apply the Scriptures to daily life. The Gospels can be mined for their biblical theological treasures; however, they also seek to form one’s worldview around the person of Jesus and call one into discipleship. Study is important, but spiritual formation should be the goal (2 Tim 2:15; Heb 5:11-6:2). So, while this facilitator was correct to assert that scholarship is not identical to spiritual formation, scholarship can certainly lead to more faithful life application. The primary issue at hand is the *goal* of study. If the intent of biblical theology is to acquire knowledge, then it is deficient and impoverished. The goal of biblical theology should be the love of God and spiritual formation.¹¹ In the words of

⁹ Interview with Calvary Church Small Group Facilitator, April 18, 2020.

¹⁰ Interview with Calvary Church Small Group Facilitator, April 18, 2020.

¹¹ Daniel Doriani in his helpful monograph, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application*, argues that the, “The foundation of application is always the knowledge of God, Creator and Redeemer.” See, Daniel M. Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001), 54.

Daniel Doriani, “theology” and to that I might add, biblical theology, is “a practical art that inculcates wisdom for living.”¹² Study should not be pitted against application, the art of study provides the foundation to apply Scripture appropriately.

Role of the Gospels in the Local Church

Finally, the Gospels should play a central role in discipleship in the local church. As the GFS highlighted, only thirteen participants said that their small group studied one of the Gospels in the past year. As the Discipleship Pastor I bear some of this responsibility as I set the direction for the small groups. Unless one of the Gospels is highlighted in a sermon series, they have not played a prominent role in Calvary Church’s discipleship ministry within the last five years. The Gospels should take center stage because as has been the central argument of this entire project, they lead us into a Christ-centered, biblical theological understanding of the entire Bible. They are worldview shaping primers on the Christian life. There are at least three practical strategies for recovering the central role the Gospels should play in the life of the church. First, pastoral staff can regularly encourage small groups and classes to study the Gospels. Second, a Gospel reading could be incorporated into the Sunday corporate gathering. A regular Gospel reading would keep the Gospels central to the life and teaching of the church. Finally, pastoral staff can encourage personal study and Bible reading and provide reading calendars and tools to foster a love of Scripture. The Bible reading habits identified from the initial GFS reveal that most small group participants are reading the Bible one hour or less in a week (64.29 percent read the Bible one hour or less in a typical week). The results also revealed that 28.57 percent of small group members do not study the Bible at all. Immersing congregants in the Gospels and regularly encouraging reading/study will help nurture greater Bible engagement.

¹² Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 58.

Personal Reflections

While aspects of this project's purpose were accomplished (e.g. ability for participants to identify intertexts in the Gospels, and understanding the importance of worldview), the project did not accomplish the overall goal of helping participants identify the significance of intertextuality for forming a worldview shaping biblical theology. Through this project I have learned a very fundamental lesson: teaching and discipleship are related but not identical. To know something (i.e. via teaching) is not the same thing as recognizing significance (i.e. application), and more importantly living differently as a result (i.e. discipleship). This highlights the important truth that one's heart and mind need to be "opened" to the truth of Scripture (Luke 24:32, 45). Divine initiative is required for true transformation to take place. The responsibility of the pastor is to challenge congregants to see the significance of theological insight. Making connections is perhaps one of the hardest tasks of the pastoral role, but it is central to the calling (1 Tim 4:11-16; 2 Tim 3:10-17). Robust theological church-based education and application are not mutually exclusive. Faithful discipleship ministry requires rich church-based biblical education and pastors who are trained to equip the congregation to make connections to everyday life (i.e. application).

Conclusion

This chapter began by assessing the degree to which this project's purpose was accomplished. The purpose of this project was to train Calvary Church small group members to understand how the four Gospels use the Old Testament to establish a biblical theological foundation for whole-life discipleship. I determined that participants grew in their ability to identify Old Testament connections within the Gospel of Matthew and came to recognize the importance of worldview formation for whole-life discipleship. This project did not accomplish the goal of helping participants identify the significance of intertextuality for forming a worldview shaping biblical theology. After reviewing the goals of this project and making the determination that the project's goals

were accomplished, the primary themes of the facilitator interviews were highlighted. While some facilitators said that the curriculum and training enriched their understanding of Old Testament and New Testament connections, others said that the curriculum was too academic. This chapter then highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of the project. I determined that the project had good participation, but that it lacked an emphasis on application. As a result, I highlighted some strategies to place more of an emphasis on application if I were to conduct this project again. This chapter then underscored key theological and personal reflections on the nature of the project. These reflections addressed the relationship between education, application, and the role of the Spirit in formation. I determined that a robust theological education in the Gospels is essential in the church, but that the pastor must push the congregation to make connections to personal formation. I also highlighted that ultimately it is the Holy Spirit that works out these applications in one's life.

APPENDIX 1

TRAINING COURSE EVALUATION RUBRIC

The following rubric was used to critique the facilitator training course. The expert panel utilized this rubric and submitted feedback to the author prior to the teaching of this course.

TRAINING COURSE EVALUATION RUBRIC

| Training Course Evaluation Tool | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|----------|
| Lesson 1 Evaluation | | | | | |
| 1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary | | | | | |
| Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Comments |
| The lesson clearly defines metanarrative. | | | | | |
| The lesson clearly shows the relevance of metanarrative for discipleship. | | | | | |
| The material is theologically robust and accurate. | | | | | |
| The language used in the lesson is accessible to adults who are college-age and older. | | | | | |
| The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated. | | | | | |
| The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis. | | | | | |
| The lesson provides clear practical next steps for participants. | | | | | |
| The lesson thoroughly covers the content. | | | | | |
| Overall, the lesson is clearly presented. | | | | | |
| Further comments: | | | | | |

| Training Course Evaluation Tool | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------|
| Lesson 2 Evaluation | | | | | |
| 1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary | | | | | |
| Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Comments |
| The concept of intertextuality is clearly communicated. | | | | | |
| The intertextual connections in the Gospels are clearly identified. | | | | | |
| The material is theologically robust and accurate. | | | | | |
| The language used in the lesson is accessible to adults who are college-age and older. | | | | | |
| The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated. | | | | | |
| The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis. | | | | | |
| The lesson provides clear practical next steps for participants. | | | | | |
| The lesson thoroughly covers the content. | | | | | |
| Overall, the lesson is clearly presented. | | | | | |
| Further Comments: | | | | | |

| Training Course Evaluation Tool | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------|
| Lesson 3 Evaluation | | | | | |
| 1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary | | | | | |
| Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Comments |
| The Gospels' use of the Old Testament is clearly connected to discipleship. | | | | | |
| The material is theologically robust and accurate. | | | | | |
| The language used in the lesson is accessible to adults who are college-age and older. | | | | | |
| The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated. | | | | | |
| The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis. | | | | | |
| The lesson provides clear practical next steps for participants. | | | | | |
| The lesson thoroughly covers the content. | | | | | |
| Overall, the lesson is clearly presented. | | | | | |
| Further Comments: | | | | | |

APPENDIX 2

SG CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

The following rubric was used to critique the small group curriculum. The expert panel utilized this rubric and submitted feedback to the author prior to the implementation of the curriculum.

SG CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

| SG Curriculum Evaluation Tool | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------|
| Lesson to be evaluated: | | | | | |
| 1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary | | | | | |
| Criteria | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Comments |
| The lesson clearly communicates its purpose. | | | | | |
| The examples of intertextuality are clearly presented. | | | | | |
| The material is theologically robust and accurate. | | | | | |
| The language used in the lesson is accessible to adults who are college-age and older. | | | | | |
| The curriculum clearly connects intertextuality to the metanarrative of the Bible. | | | | | |
| Clear applications of intertextuality and metanarrative are made to discipleship. | | | | | |
| The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material. | | | | | |
| Overall, the lesson is clearly presented. | | | | | |
| Further Comments: | | | | | |

APPENDIX 3

GOSPEL FLUENCY SUVEY

The following was administered to the small group facilitators and members prior to going through the training and curriculum. The same survey was administered at the conclusion of the project. The author collected the data and conducted a *t*-test of the dependent samples to determine if there was a significant statistical difference.

GOSPEL FLUENCY SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to determine if the participant recognizes the significance of the Gospels' use of the Old Testament for establishing a biblical theological foundation for discipleship. This research is being conducted by Tucker Anderson for the purpose of collecting data for a doctoral ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions prior to engagement in the training and/or curriculum and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. *Participation is totally voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time.*

By completion of this survey, and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

I agree to participate

I do not agree to participate

This survey is anonymous, but in order to match your pre and post-survey results, please make up a four-digit numerical code.

Four-digit numerical identification code: _____

Part 1

Directions: Answer the following questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

1. In the past three months, how much time did you spend reading the Bible in a typical week?
 A. None
 B. Less than one hour
 C. One hour
 D. More than one hour
2. In the past three months, how much time did you spend studying the Bible in a typical week (*Studying means giving focused thought, consulting other resources, or writing about a passage of Scripture*)?
 A. None

- B. Less than one hour
- C. One hour
- D. More than one hour

3. I have read through the entire Old Testament at least once.

- A. Yes
- B. No

4. I have read through the entire New Testament at least once.

- A. Yes
- B. No

5. I have had formal Bible training in a high school or post-secondary setting.

- A. Yes
- B. No

6. I currently serve as a small group facilitator.

- A. Yes
- B. No

7. My small group has studied one of the Gospels this past year.

- A. Yes
- B. No

Part 2

Directions: Circle the answer that best reflects your opinion of the statement.

Key:

SD = Strongly Disagree

D = Disagree

DS = Disagree Somewhat

AS = Agree Somewhat

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 8. The context of an Old Testament quotation is <i>necessary</i> for understanding its use in the New Testament. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. The Gospel writers use Old Testament quotations without regard for their original context. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. One cannot understand Jesus' ministry without knowing his Old Testament context. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 11. When reading the Gospels, I look for how the Gospels "echo" the Old Testament to make theological claims about the nature of Jesus (<i>an "echo" is a reference, or hint, but not a direct quotation of the Old Testament</i>). | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 12. The Gospels connect Jesus with King David, but Jesus' identity could be understood apart from making this connection. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 13. The exodus theme is something I keep in mind when reading the Gospels. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 14. I have considered how Isaiah 40-66 is foundational for understanding the Gospels. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

Key:

SD = Strongly Disagree

D = Disagree

DS = Disagree Somewhat

AS = Agree Somewhat

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

- | | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 15. I know how to identify echoes of the Old Testament within the Gospels. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 16. The following statement is true about me: When reading Matthew 1:23, I would also read Isaiah 7 because I cannot understand Matthew 1:23 without the larger context of Isaiah 7. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 17. The Gospel writers keep the Old Testament context in mind when quoting a passage even if the original context is not directly related to Jesus. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 18. Jesus' ministry <i>can</i> be understood <i>without</i> understanding the Old Testament. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 19. Reading the Gospels has changed the way I understand the Old Testament. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 20. Understanding how the Gospels use the Old Testament is the <i>best</i> way of learning the larger story of the Bible. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 21. Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in the Gospels is <i>most often</i> "predictive" in nature (<i>predictive means that the Old Testament writer intentionally had the Messiah in view</i>). | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 22. The Gospels' usage of the Old Testament has had practical applications for me as a disciple. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 23. The story of the Bible should be a foundational part of a church's adult discipleship curriculum. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

Key:

SD = Strongly Disagree

D = Disagree

DS = Disagree Somewhat

AS = Agree Somewhat

A = Agree

SA = Strongly Agree

| | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 24. God's kingdom is central to the storyline of the Bible. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 25. The Bible is <i>best</i> understood as one coherent story. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 26. I could describe the major themes of the Bible's grand story if asked. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 27. The Gospel writers present Jesus as the culmination of the biblical story. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 28. Everyone (regardless of religious affiliation) believes a larger story about the world. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 29. I often think about the larger story which guides my life. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 30. I know how to apply the biblical story to my life. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 31. I have learned the larger storyline of the Bible by reading the Gospels. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 32. The Gospels should be the foundation of a church's discipleship curriculum <i>as a means of teaching the larger story of the Bible</i> . | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 33. Within the past year, my small group has discussed the larger storyline of the Bible as part of a curriculum. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 34. The following statement is true about me: If I was to disciple a new believer, the storyline of the Bible would play a primary role in my curriculum choice. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

APPENDIX 4

FACILITATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions were utilized in the follow-up interviews with the small group facilitators. The responses were used in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the project.

FACILITATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What did you find to be the most helpful part of the facilitator training course?
2. What did you find to be the least helpful part of the facilitator training course?
3. What is the one thing that you would recommend be changed about the training course?
4. What did you find to be the most helpful part of the small group curriculum?
5. What did you find to be the least helpful part of the small group curriculum?
6. What is the one thing that you would recommend be changed about the small group curriculum?
7. Describe the overall attendance for your small group? What percentage of the members were present for each session?
8. Do you plan to continue reading the Gospels utilizing the method outlined in the small group curriculum? Why or why not?
9. Do you have any other questions or comments?

APPENDIX 5

TREASURES OLD AND NEW: THE STORY OF THE BIBLE IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM

The following is a manuscript of the small group curriculum developed for this project. The curriculum in this appendix does not include the pictures and text box content included in the curriculum distributed to small groups.

INTRODUCTION

He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old” (Matthew 13:52).¹

There is no storeroom large enough to contain the theological treasures in the Gospels. The Gospels will captivate a child and challenge the theologian. They are easy enough for a new believer to comprehend and challenging enough to test the understanding of the seasoned believer. My hope is that through this study you will add new treasures to your Gospel storehouse—that you will see their rich complexity and marvel at their beautiful simplicity. But most importantly, I hope you will come to have a greater love for Jesus, the one whom the Gospels richly portray. *The goal of this discipleship study is to help you become a better reader of the Gospels by paying attention to how they use and interpret the Old Testament Scriptures.* In their use of the Old Testament, each of the Gospel writers show us three things: 1) The good news of Jesus is a continuation of a much longer story—a story that reaches back to the dawn of creation, 2) How we should read the Old Testament, and 3) Finally, the Gospel writers form us as disciples.

The Gospels as a Continuation of the Biblical Story

As human beings we are deeply shaped by story. It is through story that we make sense of our lives. Without some larger story, life would ultimately be meaningless. To say it another way, each of us have some kind of picture of the good life.² What is

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture references are from the New International Version (NIV).

² James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 134, Kindle.

your vision of the good life? What is the problem to be addressed? Your answer to these questions will tell you the larger story you believe about yourself and the world. As disciples of Jesus we are called to believe a new story.³ The reason many people claim to be Christians but look no different from their neighbor next door, is because they are still believing the false stories of our culture—stories shaped by consumerism or need for sexual fulfillment.⁴ The Gospels invite us into the “true story of our world” and by inviting us in, they teach us how we are to view our neighbor, our community, and our world.⁵ Each of the Evangelists in their own creative way accomplish this through frequent echoes and quotations of the Hebrew Scriptures. You will find that even the opening verse of the New Testament, “This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham,” (Matt 1:1) carries rich Old Testament echoes which point to the larger story.

The Gospels Teach Us How to Read the Bible

For many years, I did not know how to think about the Gospels’ use of the Old Testament. It appeared that a passage like Matthew 2:15 was an example of how NOT to treat the Old Testament (Matthew is quoting from Hosea 11:1. I invite you to read Matthew’s quotation and Hosea 11). Over the past couple of years, I have come to see that my thinking needs to be transformed. The way Matthew is using the Old Testament is utterly profound (the same could be said of Mark, Luke, and John). Each writer shows us how to read the Old Testament.⁶ To say it another way, they give us the lens to read

³ Trevin K. Wax, *Eschatological Discipleship: Leading Christians to Understand Their Historical and Cultural Context* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018), 11–12.

⁴ Wax, *Eschatological Discipleship*, 11–12.

⁵ Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 22.

⁶ Richard B Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 104.

the Scriptures rightly.⁷

I thoroughly enjoyed art classes in high school as I was captivated by the skills of the art teachers. It amazed me how they had a vision for a blank canvas, that they could see the rich detail and nuance of what they set out to produce. For instance, I remember my art teacher giving demonstrations and modeling what we were to paint. At first the initial brush strokes looked out of place. The color choices did not seem to make any sense. But as more brush strokes were made, what was originally unintelligible began to take shape. What once only seemed like random lines suddenly became a work of art. I have had a similar experience reading the Scriptures. At times an Old Testament story may seem out of place and difficult to understand. It might not make immediate sense in the larger overarching drama. But when viewed through the lens of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, what was once unintelligible becomes a beautiful story of redemption.⁸ The Gospels teach us how to rightly read the Old Testament.

Echoes

As modern-day readers, we do not know the Old Testament like the Gospel writers or the earliest believers. Because of this we miss many of the subtle echoes to the Old Testament that would have loudly reverberated in the ears of the first listeners. We experience a similar phenomenon today with marketing and advertisement campaigns. There are certain slogans and phrases that have become so commonplace that everyone knows to what they are referring. For instance, if I say, “I’m loving it,” you might start thinking about fast food. But this only brings us halfway to what the Gospels are doing when they use the Old Testament. The Gospels do much more than simply recall echoes of the Hebrew Scriptures.

⁷ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 4.

⁸ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 2.

Depth from Echoes

Recognizing Old Testament references (both quotations and echoes) WILL add depth to your understanding of the Gospels. If you have ever been called a “Scrooge,” your mind probably went to the classic tale and bemoaned any association with the infamous Ebenezer. Notice how one word packages much more than a sentence in this instance. Your mind conjures an entire story with just that one word. When the Gospels utilize an Old Testament phrase or word, it functions like a theological package waiting to be unwrapped.

Depth with a New Twist

The Gospels go even a step further. Oftentimes the Evangelists will take words, phrases, or quotations and give them a new twist. This is the most powerful form of echo. Martin Luther King uses this type of echo throughout his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. His speech begins with, “Five-score years ago a great American in whose symbolic shadow we stand today signed the Emancipation Proclamation.” What many do not realize is that King intentionally echoed the first words of “The Gettysburg Address.” Abraham Lincoln began, “Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”⁹ It would have taken an astute listener to hear this echo, but it clearly adds to the richness of King’s speech with the new twist provided by the context of the Civil Rights movement. The Gospels frequently engage in this same rhetorical strategy yielding treasures for the one who has ears to hear (Matt 13:52; 11:15).

The Gospels Form Us as Disciples

We can know Jesus better by paying attention to how the Gospels echo the larger story of Scripture through their use of the Old Testament. Discipleship requires us

⁹ Chelle Stein makes this connection in her blog. See, Chelle Stein, “Allusion: Examples of How to Use It in Your Writing,” *Think Written Blog*, June 4, 2018, <https://thinkwritten.com/allusion/>.

to be good and attentive readers. There is more to a story than meets the eye. A close reading is challenging, but extremely rewarding. Knowing how the Evangelists use the Old Testament can give us a greater depth of understanding and ultimately a greater love for Jesus. This study is going to push you to read the Gospels in a way that you have not before. It is going to challenge you to become a student of Jesus, and a student of the Evangelists. If you take this to heart, you will find that you need a bigger storehouse to house all of the rich discoveries.

Because this curriculum is limited to five weeks, it will only focus on major themes in the Gospel of Matthew. Through these five weeks, the hope is that this curriculum will train you to recognize the way Matthew (and by extension the other Gospel writers) uses the Old Testament and why this is important and relevant for discipleship. Below is an outline of what you can expect:

Week 1: Son of David, Son of Abraham (Matt 1:1-17)

Week 2: Israel's New Exodus (Matt 2:1-18)

Week 3: Anointed Son of God (Matt 3:1-17)

Week 4: The Suffering Servant King (Matt 27:11-56)

Week 5: The King of New Creation (Matt 28:16-20)

Each week will consist of:

- Background reading related to the way Matthew uses the Old Testament
- Questions to orient the small group to the theme
- Discussion questions on a passage in Matthew and Old Testament references
- Application reflection
- Application challenge
- Further resources

I highly recommend that you do the background reading prior to coming together as a group because it will orient you to the major theme that you will be discussing. Be sure to read the Old Testament passages first, then read the passage from

the Gospel of Matthew. By reading in this order, you are more likely to see the echoes and quotations of the Old Testament in Matthew. Each week will have specific application questions, as well as suggested readings and exercises.

My hope and prayer is that you will find this experience of reading the Gospel of Matthew every bit as enriching as I have, that this curriculum would open the Scriptures for you in a new way, and that Christ would open your heart to see him afresh (if you are curious about some echoes in this last paragraph, see Luke 24).

SON OF DAVID, SON OF ABRAHAM

Background Reading

In the Beginning

The Bible is one unified story. Like any story, it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. But unlike other stories, the Bible makes an astounding claim. It makes the claim of being the one “true story of our world.”¹⁰ The Bible tells of a Creator God, and this Creator flung the heavenly bodies into existence. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1). God crowns his masterpiece with his greatest achievement. “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Gen 1:27). This first human couple are painted as king and queen over creation when they are told to,

Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground (Gen 1:28).

But with any story there is a problem and a rising tension. It does not take long for the royal couple to rebel against their Creator (Gen 3). Instead of being image bearers of God, they longed to be like God in a way never intended (Gen 3:6). Adam and Eve were lured by the cunning serpent (Gen 3:4). Alongside this plotline of humanity’s corruption and rebellion, there is a subtle and underlying story. In Genesis 3:15 God’s seed of redemption is planted. Throughout the pages of Scripture, it spreads its roots, it bursts through the soil and the picture of its full bloom is painted for us on the final pages of the New Testament (Gen 3:15-Rev 22:21). This grand story is best summed up in four

¹⁰ Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 22.

major chapters: creation, fall, redemption, and new creation.

The Promise to Abraham

Genesis 12 is a major turning point. One could describe it as a humanity restart.¹¹ God takes one man, and calls him from his family, land, and religion (Abram was a pagan, a worshipper of idols—Joshua 24:2) and leads him on a journey to a land on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It is not an overstatement to say that the calling of Abram (Gen 12:3) frames the rest of the Bible—it is that important! God promises Abram,

“I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you” (Gen 12:2-3).

The rest of Scripture describes a God who was bringing the promise of Abraham to its fulfillment.

The Promise to David

King David is another major figure in the Old Testament. A shepherd by trade (1 Sam 16:11), David was the youngest of his brothers and the least likely candidate to assume the throne of Israel. But God chose, anointed, and installed David as king. To David he promises,

¹¹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 199–200.

When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever (2 Sam 7:12-13).

God promised David that he would have a son on the throne forever. When reading through the Old Testament, one wonders how this promise would be fulfilled. Solomon, David's son, sat on the throne but turned in disobedience, and died. Solomon's son, Rehoboam was ultimately responsible for the division of the kingdom, and he would come to an end like his father (1 Kgs 12:16-24). For the next four hundred years, Judah would see failure after failure in a long succession of kings. The disobedience of Judah eventually led them into exile in Babylon (586-539/8 BC), away from their land, and without a king. How was God going to fulfill his promise to David to have a son on the throne forever? How was God going to fulfill his promise to Abraham that he would be a blessing to the nations?

After the fall of Babylon, the Persian King Cyrus permitted the Jews to leave Babylon and return to their land (539 BC). Under the leadership of figures like Sheshbazzar (Ezra 1:8), Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:8), Ezra (Ezra 7:6), and Nehemiah (Neh 2:1-8), the Jews returned to the land from which they were dragged. With the close of the historical books (Ezra and Nehemiah), biblical history is silent for four hundred years.¹² Many of the Jews had returned to the land (though not all), the temple had been rebuilt (but it was only a pale reminder of its former glory), and the wall was restored (but not nearly the size of its original footprint). The ancient promises once made to Abraham and David probably seemed like a failed hope for their descendants. Had God failed to make good on his promises?

The Gospels

The Gospels are set in this larger story. In fact, the Gospel writers (and in

¹² Carl G. Rasmussen, *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 179.

particular Matthew), saw themselves as writing the next chapter.¹³ Matthew is calling his readers to keep the Old Testament in mind as they read his Gospel.¹⁴ It is estimated that there are fifty-four to fifty-five quotations of the Old Testament in Matthew and over 262 echoes to the Old Testament.¹⁵ To put this in perspective, there are only sixty-five quotations in the other three Gospels combined.¹⁶ Matthew's emphasis on Jesus fulfilling the Old Testament is one of the features that makes his Gospel unique. This is not to say that the other Gospels do not focus on fulfillment, but Matthew places a special focus on this theme.¹⁷ In his first two chapters, Matthew teaches his audience how to read/listen to the rest of the Gospel. As you read through the first two chapters of the Gospel of Matthew you will notice that Matthew frequently says something like, "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet" (Matt 1:22). In fact, of the eleven quotations in Matthew that begin with this phrase (or something similar), five of them are found in the first two chapters.¹⁸ This is Matthew's creative way of arguing that Jesus is continuing the story of Israel. The early church recognized this feature of Matthew, which was one of the reasons why Matthew was placed at the front of the New Testament—it serves as the bridge to the Old Testament.¹⁹

What does it mean that Jesus fulfills the Scriptures, or completes the story of Israel? The answer can be given in one phrase—God has kept his promises. The promises

¹³ Jonathan T. Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 27–28.

¹⁴ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 10–11, Logos Bible Software.

¹⁵ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 10–11; Craig Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 1, Logos Bible Software.

¹⁶ Blomberg, "Matthew," 1.

¹⁷ Jeannine K. Brown and Kyle Roberts, *Matthew*, THNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2018), 13, Logos Bible Software.

¹⁸ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 13–14.

¹⁹ Blomberg, "Matthew," 2.

of an eternal king or a worldwide blessing did not lay buried beneath the rubble of Jerusalem's former glory. In Jesus, God was completing what he started.²⁰ This is the theme you will focus on in the first week of this study. You will explore why Matthew introduces the New Testament with this bombshell, "This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt 1:1).

So What?

But you might be wondering, why does it matter that I know about Matthew's use of the Old Testament? If Matthew was written to a Jewish audience—those who were steeped in the Hebrew Scriptures—it makes sense that they would care about these Old Testament connections. But why should I care? There are two important reasons that you should pay special attention to how Matthew uses the Old Testament.

First, Matthew is teaching you a new story to give you a new identity. Whether you think about it or not, you are believing some type of larger story about yourself and this story is informing your everyday decisions. Matthew is calling you to believe a bigger story, a story that begins with creation, a story that involves a promise that in Abraham the world would be blessed, a story about an eternal Davidic King, and a story into which he is inviting you. Because of Jesus, Israel's story has become your story. As a disciple of Jesus, you are called to a new identity. As followers of Jesus we should take care to know this larger story and reading the Gospel of Matthew is a great place to begin.

Second, this is ultimately a matter of discipleship. If we are going to follow Jesus, it is of the utmost importance that we know who it is that we are following.²¹ Discipleship is studying and learning from the Master. At the end of the Gospel of Luke,

²⁰ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 14.

²¹ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 12.

Jesus met the eleven disciples and “opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45). Jesus explained to the disciples how all of the Scriptures ultimately point to him. It is only when the disciples understood with their heart how Jesus was the treasure of Scripture that they were empowered for mission. When they saw Jesus anew, they saw themselves in a new light as well.

In this first lesson, you are going to explore how story shapes the way you live. You are going to be challenged to look at the larger story you are believing about yourself. You will be challenged to see how Matthew is opening your eyes to a bigger story.

Background on Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew was most likely written by Levi (Matthew) the tax collector (Matt 9:9-13), one of the twelve disciples. He was probably one of the only one of Jesus’ disciples who could actually read and write, which makes him a fitting candidate for one of the four Gospel authors.²² Some scholars like Craig Blomberg believe that Levi is referring to himself in Matthew 13:52, describing himself as a scribe (those who were skilled in reading and writing).²³ It is widely recognized that the Gospel of Matthew was written to a Jewish audience—an audience that was grappling with a mission to the gentiles.²⁴ Matthew’s audience was Jewish believers in Jesus who were most likely living around Syrian Antioch in what is now the far southern part of modern day Turkey.²⁵

²² Blomberg, “Matthew,” 1.

²³ Blomberg, “Matthew,” 1.

²⁴ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 17–18.

²⁵ Blomberg, “Matthew,” 1.

Opening Questions

- 1) If you are a new group, take some time to get to know one another. Take an item from your purse/wallet (I.D., library card, credit card, business card, etc.) and using that item, share a story about yourself. If you are already an established group, share the earliest story about yourself you can remember.
- 2) “Who are you?” How would you answer this question to your group? What are the first things that come to mind? What do you think this says about how you view your identity?

Read

Old Testament

Genesis 12:1-13

2 Samuel 7:13-16

New Testament

Matthew 1:1-17

Explore

- 1) As you reflect on the background reading and the Old Testament passages (Gen 12:1-14; 2 Sam 7:13-16) what do you think Matthew’s Jewish audience would have heard when Matthew describes Jesus as “the Messiah,” “the Son of David,” and “the son of Abraham”?
- 2) A universal promise (Gen 12:1-13) and an eternal kingdom (2 Sam 7:13-16) means that there are implications for you today. When you consider the significance of these promises, what is Matthew telling us about Jesus in the very first verse of the Gospel?
- 3) How many women do you see in Matthew’s genealogy? Given that most Jewish genealogies only contained male lineage, why is it significant that Matthew includes these women?

- 4) The women in the genealogy were gentiles (with the exception of Mary). How do these members of Jesus' genealogy highlight the worldwide promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3?
- 5) The men listed in vv. 6-11 trace the kings of Judah (David's descendants through Solomon). If Jesus is a descendant of the kings of Judah, in what way does this show a fulfillment of 2 Samuel 7:13-16?
- 6) Given what you have explored as a group, why would Matthew begin his Gospel in the way he does?

Apply

- 7) If Jesus is the long-awaited Davidic King, what does that mean for you today? If Jesus is King, how should you respond?
- 8) In Matthew 1:1-17 you have read about a God who keeps his promises in quite an unexpected way. What should be our response to a God who keeps his promises?
- 9) Throughout this study, we will explore the ways that Jesus completes the larger story of redemption. How does this larger story challenge the competing stories that we hear from our neighbors, colleagues, the news, etc.?
- 10) How should the larger story that God is writing inform our day-to-day decisions?

Application Reflection

Everyone believes a larger story about life.²⁶ The question we want to ask ourselves is this: does it accord with the larger story of Scripture? Take some time to consider the cultural stories you hear around family, work, etc. What is the true story the Bible paints of these spheres?

Application Challenge

Think of one tangible way you can show your family and neighbors that your

²⁶ Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 160.

life is shaped by the larger story of Scripture.

For Further study

For further study on the larger biblical story and the way Jesus is the focus and fulfillment of this story, watch the following video:

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/the-messiah/>.

ISRAEL'S NEW EXODUS

Background Reading

Background on Matthew 2

The Gospel writers used the Old Testament in a way that for many of us is unfamiliar. This is especially evident in the first few chapters of Matthew. In Matthew 2 the curtain opens with Magi (Greek: *magoi*, wise men well versed in religion and astrology)²⁷ coming from the east inquiring about the “king of the Jews” (v. 2). For the paranoid Herod this must have been an insult as he viewed himself as the rightful king of the Jews.²⁸ But Herod played their game and viewed this as an opportunity to squash any rival. Herod gathers together the chief priests and teachers of the law (v. 4) to inquire where this king of the Jews was to be born. The religious elites find the place in Micah 5:2 where it says,

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.

As you look at the quotation in Matthew 2:6, you may notice that there are a few differences between Matthew's quotation and Micah's original statement. It was a common occurrence for Jewish writers (we have to remember that Matthew was thoroughly Jewish) to sometimes paraphrase or modify a quotation to highlight a certain aspect of the quotation.²⁹ It was also commonplace to combine multiple quotations. You

²⁷ Johannes P. Louw and Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:384.

²⁸ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 33; Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, NAC, vol. 22 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 62.

²⁹ Blomberg, “Matthew,” 6.

will notice that Matthew adds an additional phrase (see bolded), “...for out of you will come a ruler **who will shepherd my people Israel**” (Matt 2:6). What is Matthew doing? Some scholars suggest that Matthew is combining Micah 5:2 and 2 Samuel 5:2, “In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the Lord said to you, ‘You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.’”³⁰ It was not uncommon for Jewish writers to combine two different passages that were connected by a similar theme.

The Prophet Micah prophesied during a time of great turmoil on the world scene. The Assyrians had advanced into the land of Israel and Judah, taking the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel (Samaria) (722 BC) and nearly taking the capital of Judah (Jerusalem) (701 BC). Toward the end of Micah’s prophetic career, a new political power was emerging on the world stage, the Babylonians. Micah 5:1 seems to be a prophecy about Jerusalem’s eventual demise by the Babylonian army.³¹ Imagine yourself in this context. Your king is utterly disgraced, and your holy city a heap of ruins. But Micah reminded his listeners that there was still hope. From the humble village of Bethlehem, would come the revival of David’s dynasty. It would be the Messiah, who would ultimately lead his people from their exile, not the frail kings of Micah’s contemporaries.³²

The two other prophetic passages in Matthew 2:15 (quotation of Hos 11:1) and Matthew 2:17 (quotation of Jer 31:15) also speak about the horrors of exile, but they too reassure with the promised hope of return and restoration.³³ In Hosea and Jeremiah, it is God who will ultimately bring the Israelites out of their exile and lead them in a new

³⁰ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 71–72; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 64.

³¹ Kenneth L. Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, NAC, vol. 20 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 95, Logos Bible Software.

³² Barker, *Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah*, 96.

³³ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 36–37.

exodus (Jer 31:23; Hos 11:11).³⁴ But why does Matthew use these particular quotations in Hosea and Jeremiah? A quick read of their original context will show that these passages are not prophetic passages, at least in the way that we typically think of predictions (Mic 5:2 is the only prediction passage in Matt 2).³⁵ We need to broaden our understanding of how Matthew uses the Old Testament, and when we do, our hearts and minds will be opened to the richness, depth, and transformative power of Scripture.³⁶

Patterns and Themes

I remember the very first time I led a Bible study. I was in my living room with twenty other high school students and I proceeded to lead a study on proving the reliability of the Bible by pointing to the vast amount of prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. I threw out some astronomical number about the possibility of Jesus fulfilling these prophecies by chance. What my younger self did not realize was that many of the Old Testament passages used as “fulfillment” passages were not predicting the Messiah in the sense that we often think. This is not to say that there are no passages in the Old Testament that predict the coming of the Messiah (Mic 5:2 for example), but I have come to learn that the Gospel writers used the Old Testament in a much more profound way than simply scouring the Scriptures for predictions.

One of the primary ways the Gospel of Matthew (and the other three Gospels) uses the Old Testament is to see various “patterns.”³⁷ What do I mean by patterns? Let me illustrate with the theme of exodus—one of the more obvious patterns (or themes) in

³⁴ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 37.

³⁵ Blomberg, “Matthew,” 7.

³⁶ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 4.

³⁷ Richard B Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), conclusion, para. 2, Kindle.

the Old Testament.³⁸ For instance, the main exodus event is recorded in Exodus 12-15 when God through Aaron and Moses led his people out of the land of Egypt and into the wilderness. This exodus theme is picked up throughout the rest of the Old Testament. The crossing of the Jordan river (Josh 3) patterns the crossing of the Red Sea.³⁹ Prophets such as Isaiah (Isa 40:3) and Jeremiah (Jer 31:23) predicted a future exodus—return from exile—when God’s people would again return to the land.

Fast forward to the New Testament, and the New Testament authors see these same patterns. For instance, Jesus, Moses, and Elijah spoke about the “departure” (Greek: *exodos*) that Jesus was going to accomplish in Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). The Gospel writers revisit this theme in many more subtle ways too, ways you will explore in the study this week. It could be said that Jesus was bringing the exodus theme to completion by enacting the ultimate exodus in Jerusalem. Or to say it another way, Jesus was “fulfilling” the exodus.

In addition to patterns with events, the Old Testament and New Testament trace patterns with people. For example, Adam is the representative of the old creation where Christ is the representative of the new creation (Rom 5:14). Even places and structures such as Eden and the temple serve as themes that are traced throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament. With the coming of Christ, the earlier events or people receive greater meaning and significance.⁴⁰

Understanding the Broader Context of Jeremiah and Hosea

As was mentioned above, the prophets picked up on this theme of exodus and reimagined and used exodus language for their context. Both Hosea and Jeremiah were

³⁸ G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 22.

³⁹ Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 22.

⁴⁰ Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 14.

writing and speaking during a time of great turmoil. Hosea was prophesying in the northern kingdom of Israel at a time when the Assyrians were advancing into the land (8th century BC). Assyria would be God's vehicle of judgment upon the northern kingdom of Israel due to their disobedience. But Hosea also spoke about a time when God would bring Israel back into the land: "'They will come from Egypt, trembling like sparrows, from Assyria, fluttering like doves. I will settle them in their homes,' declares the Lord" (Hos 11:11). Similarly, Jeremiah was prophesying in the kingdom of Judah when Babylon led the Judeans into exile (6th century BC). The prophet looked forward to a time when God will "...bring them back from captivity, the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: 'The Lord bless you, you prosperous city, you sacred mountain'" (Jer 31:23). Hosea and Jeremiah looked forward to a day when God would lead his people out of exile and enact a new exodus.⁴¹

It is no wonder that Matthew looks back to Hosea and Jeremiah and quotes from two passages that speak about a new exodus, a new return from exile. It is not that Matthew looks back and sees these as prediction passages, but that Matthew sees a greater fulfillment of the exodus theme in the life of Jesus Christ.

Opening Questions

- 1) Think about the most recent time that you watched a movie from your childhood. Most likely you caught more cultural references and understood words and aspects of the plotline that you would have missed when you were younger. Why do you have a greater understanding? What changed?
- 2) Is there an event in your life that gained more significance many years after the fact? If so, was there a later event or person that made this earlier event more significant?

⁴¹ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 37.

Read

Old Testament

Micah 5:2-4

Jeremiah 31 (pay special attention to 31:15)

Hosea 11 (pay special attention to 11:1)

New Testament

Matthew 2:1-18

Explore

- 1) As the background reading showed, Matthew 2:6 shows Jesus as the rightful king, the rightful ruler. How does Matthew contrast Jesus, the true king, with Herod, the corrupt and illegitimate king?
- 2) Read Hosea 11:1-11. God refers to Israel as his son (v. 1). Hosea proceeds to describe Israel as turning to idols (v. 2), and yet God continues to pursue his people. What does God promise to do for Israel?
- 3) Read Jeremiah 31 in its entirety. In Jeremiah 31:15, the matriarch Rachel (Jacob's wife who was long since deceased by the time of Jeremiah) mourns for her descendants as they are carried away into exile by the Babylonians. For Rachel, it seemed like her descendants had come to an end as they were carried off to Babylon.⁴² Note God's response to Rachel in vv. 16-40. List all that God promises to do. What does this say about God's character and nature?
- 4) Hosea 11:1 is speaking about Israel; however, Matthew sees Jesus' departure from Egypt as patterning Israel's experience. Matthew expects his readers to understand the surrounding context of Hosea 11:1. How does the entirety of Hosea 11 add richness and depth to Matthew's understanding of the events surrounding Jesus in Matthew 2:13-15?

⁴² Gerald L. Keown, *Jeremiah 26-52*, WBC, vol. 27 (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1995), 119, Logos Bible Software.

- 5) Just as Rachel wept as her descendants were carried off into exile, Matthew sees Rachel weeping at the death of the male children in Bethlehem. But in Jeremiah 31 and Matthew 2 we see the theme of “deliverance.”⁴³ How does the theme of God’s deliverance in Jeremiah 31 enrich our understanding of God’s deliverance through Jesus?
- 6) In Matthew 2:13-18, Matthew sees the events surrounding the birth of Jesus as parallel to the events surrounding the exodus and exile of Israel. But as Hosea and Jeremiah highlight the disobedience of Israel, Matthew highlights the obedience of Jesus. Why does Matthew compare Jesus to Israel in this way, and why is it important to understand Jesus as a greater Israel?

Apply

- 1) Israel’s experience in Jeremiah and Hosea in many ways represents the human experience of being exiled from God’s presence. How do you respond to God who offers restoration and redemption?
- 2) By drawing on Hosea and Jeremiah, Matthew is calling the reader to see a new exodus and return from exile in the person of Jesus. Does reading Matthew in this way give you a greater appreciation for who Jesus is? Why or why not?
- 3) You are invited into this larger story that God is writing—to see yourself as exiled, in need of a Rescuer. How is this different from the stories of other religions, or the stories we hear in our culture around us?
- 4) In chapter 2, Matthew presented Jesus as king, the new Israel, one who relived the exodus, and initiates a new exodus. How can understanding these themes help you better understand the person of Jesus Christ?

⁴³ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, WBC, vol. 33A (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1993), 38, Logos Bible Software.

Application Reflection

This week introduced you to one of the main ways that the Gospel of Matthew uses the Old Testament. Matthew will pick up a theme in the Old Testament and show how Jesus fulfills or brings new meaning. Oftentimes this will require you to know the larger context of the Old Testament passage from which he is quoting. If you are willing to put in the time and effort of learning the surrounding context of an Old Testament passage, you will be able to explore many rich treasures contained within the Gospels. Hopefully this week, you saw that Jesus brings new meaning to the ancient biblical story, that he brings resolution, and that he weaves together biblical themes. How beautiful it is that in just his second chapter, Matthew describes Jesus as the true Israel, a better David, the one who was exiled for us, and the one who leads a new exodus. So what is the relevance for you and me? We are shown how the Gospel of Matthew is really a continuation of the biblical story. It is a story that finds its resolution in Jesus Christ—the true and rightful King. How will you respond?

Application Challenge

Do some journaling. How does reflecting on Jesus as the true Israel, a better David, and the one who was exiled for us help you understand the beautiful complexity of who Jesus is? How might you respond in prayer?

For Further study

For more on understanding the way the New Testament uses the Old Testament check out the following resource: Beale, G. K. *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.

ANOINTED SON OF GOD

Background Reading

In the first week we explored how Jesus is a continuation of God’s redemptive story. Last week we saw Matthew’s intricate way of weaving together the following themes: Jesus is the long-awaited King, the one who relives Israel’s experience, the one who was exiled like Israel, and leads a new exodus for his people. This week we will continue our investigation by adding an additional theme to our list. Jesus is the anointed Son of God.

The Fifth Gospel

The early church considered Isaiah to be the fifth gospel because the Evangelists quoted from Isaiah more than any other Old Testament book.⁴⁴ Within Isaiah, quotations and echoes from chapters 40-66 appear most frequently in the New Testament. These final chapters of Isaiah could be described as the foundational Old Testament passages for the entire New Testament.⁴⁵ It is here that Isaiah frames a compelling vision of the future—a prophetic vision—that anticipates a time when God would fully establish his reign. In fact, it is from this section of the Greek version of Isaiah that many scholars believe Matthew and the other Gospel writers received the inspiration to use the word “gospel” (Greek: euangelizō).

You who bring good news (euangelizō) to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.

⁴⁴ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 14.

⁴⁵ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 15.

You who bring good news to Jerusalem,
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
say to the towns of Judah,
“Here is your God” (Isa 40:9).

What is the good news—the gospel—that Isaiah is announcing? Isaiah 40-66 gives the answer: God has come to Jerusalem to reign, exile has ended, and he is going to shepherd his people (Isa 40:11).⁴⁶

But the vision of Isaiah goes beyond Jerusalem. It even goes beyond the borders of Israel. Isaiah had a vision that God would one day remake creation itself (65:17-25; 66:22). In this new creation “the wolf and the lamb will feed together” (65:25) and God will reign from his “holy mountain” in Jerusalem (65:25).

This entire section of Isaiah 40-66 which speaks about the reign of God begins with,

A voice of one calling:
“In the wilderness prepare
the way for the LORD;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,

⁴⁶ Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*, ed. William P. Brown, Carol A. Newsom, and Brent A. Strawn, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 301, Logos Bible Software; Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 16.

and all people will see it together.

For the mouth of the LORD has spoken” (Isa 40:3-5).

The Lord’s glory once known and experienced by only a few (Isa 6) is now advancing on all creation in Isaiah 40. A new day has dawned.⁴⁷

Matthew 3 introduces John the Baptist. As a prophet, he comes announcing good news in the wilderness: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matt 3:2). The reign of God (the rule that Isaiah anticipated) was imminent.⁴⁸ Matthew saw John’s ministry of preparation as a fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3 (see above). This has staggering implications for our understanding of Jesus. Isaiah 40:3 is about the preparation for the coming reign of God.⁴⁹ John the Baptist saw it as preparation for the coming of Jesus.

New Creation

Set within the context of Isaiah’s vision of new creation and restoration of Israel, the baptism of Jesus takes on significant meaning. Up to this point in his Gospel, Matthew has revealed Jesus to be the true Israel, the Davidic King, the one who is going to keep the promises made to Abraham, and the one who is going to usher in the promises of Isaiah; but at the baptism we reach the climax of the revelation about Jesus’ identity, for it is here that God himself reveals Jesus’ identity.⁵⁰ When Jesus comes up from the water, “heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him” (Matt 3:16). Some suggest that the opening of heaven is an echo of Isaiah 64:1, “Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,” a prayer that God

⁴⁷ Childs, *Isaiah*, 299.

⁴⁸ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 39–40.

⁴⁹ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 105.

⁵⁰ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 50, Logos Bible Software.

would come down and redeem his people.⁵¹ When Jesus comes up from the water, he saw the “Spirit of God descending like a dove” upon him. This is reminiscent of the anointing of the servant in Isaiah 42:1, the one who is to usher in the reign and rule of God (Isaiah 61:1).⁵² By anointing Jesus, God declares him to be the answer to the “rend the heavens” prayer. He confirms this with the words, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matt 3:17). When God declares Jesus’ identity, he uses language from Psalm 2 and Isaiah 42:1. Psalm 2 was used in coronation ceremonies of Judean kings, but no king throughout Old Testament history ever fulfilled the expectations of the psalmist.⁵³ But when God declares Jesus to be the “Son,” he is announcing Jesus to be the fulfillment of what Psalm 2 looked forward to. When we consider all of the Old Testament connections in Matthew 3, we uncover a rich portrait of Jesus. He is no less than the King and he is the servant of Isaiah who is going to usher in a new creation and establish justice on the earth. And so, it is to this climactic passage of Jesus’ identity that we now turn to in our study.

Opening Questions

- 1) Justice is a buzzword in our culture. What do you think people mean when they call for justice?
- 2) In your mind, is the world getting better or worse? Why do you feel this way?

Read

Old Testament

Isaiah 40:3 (if you have time read the entire chapter)

Isaiah 42:1 (if you have time read the entire chapter)

⁵¹ Blomberg, “Matthew,” 14; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 121.

⁵² Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 57.

⁵³ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 49.

Psalm 2:7 (See also Genesis 22)

New Testament

Matthew 3:1-17

Explore

- 1) Why does Matthew (and the other three Gospels) begin Jesus' ministry with John the Baptist? What would be missing if John's ministry was left out of the Gospels?
- 2) John's ministry is one of repentance. What is John calling the people to repent from? If the rule of God (kingdom of heaven) is imminent, how does this add urgency to John's ministry?
- 3) Read Isaiah 40 (keep in mind this is an introduction to 40-66). What does this add to your understanding of John's ministry?
- 4) Read Psalm 2. What does the context of this Psalm add to your understanding of God's statement about Jesus at the baptism?
- 5) Read Isaiah 42:1-9. What connections do you see with the baptism of Jesus (paying attention to 42:1)? What is the mission of the servant? How does this compare to the mission of Jesus?
- 6) What do the Old Testament connections add to your understanding of the baptism? Why are these connections important to keep in mind for the rest of Jesus' ministry?

Apply

- 1) John was calling the people to prepare their hearts for the coming of God in the person of Jesus Christ. What does it look like for you to prepare your heart for God's reign?
- 2) Because God identifies Jesus as the King, and the one by whom he is going to remake creation and establish justice, what does this mean for your life today? How should this shape the way you think about your family, politics, your work, etc.?

- 3) Do you think you have to understand the Old Testament to understand the ministry and person of Jesus? Why or why not?
- 4) It is enticing for us to claim that we are right with God (like the Pharisees and Sadducees in v. 9) by something other than trusting in his Beloved Son. What are idols to which you are tempted to turn rather than the person of Jesus Christ?

Application Reflection

At the time of Jesus, there was the hope and expectation that God, through the Messiah, would break the chains of Israel's political oppressors. Both John and Jesus declared that the problem was much deeper than political or societal oppression. Even Isaiah hinted at this deeper problem, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way" (Isa 53:6). What Israel needed—what you and I need—is forgiveness of sin. This is the good news that the angel proclaims to Joseph in Matthew 1:21, "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Forgiveness of sin is a prerequisite for entrance into God's kingdom and the new creation. To repent is to turn from our sin and to turn toward Jesus Christ as the King and as the servant who is going to usher in justice and righteousness on the earth. To repent is to realign our values and priorities with God's. To repent is to acknowledge that there is nothing in us by which we could possibly earn our way into this kingdom. To repent is to confess that at the core we are idol worshippers. But so often we find ourselves clinging to our idols, to false hopes, or competing visions of the "good life." To say it another way, we are tempted to chase after competing visions of the kingdom. What are the idols that you need to give up? What are the false hopes you are clinging to? What would it look like for you to cling to Jesus, the Servant-King, who will one day fully establish the rule and reign of God?

Application Challenge

Identify one of the idols to which you cling. What false hope does this idol

offer you? What will it take for you to give up this idol this week?

For Further study

For a deeper exploration into Jesus' kingship, see Keller, Timothy. *Jesus the King: Understanding the Life and Death of the Son of God*. New York: Penguin, 2011.

THE SUFFERING SERVANT KING

Background Reading

The Healer

After his baptism, Jesus is “led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil” (Matt 4:1). The temptations are directed towards Jesus’ identity that was just confirmed by the heavenly voice: “If you are the Son of God... (Matt 4:3, 6).” Jesus is victorious and begins his public ministry proclaiming the good news of the kingdom (Matt 4:17) which includes his famous Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7). Chapter eight introduces Jesus’ healing ministry.⁵⁴ A leper is made clean (Matt 8:3), a centurion’s servant is healed (Matt 8:13), Peter’s mother-in-law’s fever subsides (Matt 8:14-15), and the masses are cured (Matt 8:16). Matthew summarizes Jesus’ initial healings with Isaiah 53:4, “Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering.”

Isaiah 53:4 is part of the larger section of Isaiah known as the fourth “Servant Song” (Isa 52:13-53:12).⁵⁵ This song describes an individual who represents and gives his life as a representative for his people⁵⁶ and brings healing to Israel.⁵⁷ In Matthew, Jesus does more than forgive the sins of his people as their representative, he heals and restores as well.⁵⁸ The healings throughout the Gospel of Matthew foreshadow what Jesus will ultimately do on a grand scale when the kingdom arrives in its fullness (Rev

⁵⁴ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 83–84.

⁵⁵ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 321.

⁵⁶ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 87.

⁵⁷ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 86.

⁵⁸ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 321–22.

22:2).

From the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew provides clues to the reader that Jesus is the suffering servant of Isaiah.⁵⁹ This is the lens through which to view the entirety of Jesus' ministry. Jesus' miracles are evidence that he is the Servant Messiah that Isaiah anticipated (Matt 11:4-5).⁶⁰

The Bookends

If this was a longer study, we would explore in greater detail how Jesus' healing ministry fulfills Old Testament expectations. But in this study, we will devote our attention to the beginning and ending of Matthew's Gospel. It is at the bookends that Matthew weaves together numerous quotations and echoes to the Old Testament.⁶¹ Due to the volume of Old Testament echoes in the passage this week, I provide you with the entire passage and bold the Old Testament connections on the next page. Take some time to read through Matthew 27:11-56 and the Old Testament passages prior to coming together as a group. The quotations and echoes highlighted in the passage below are explained in greater detail in *A Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*.⁶²

Matthew 27:11-56

11 Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"You have said so," Jesus replied.

12 When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, **he gave no answer** (Isa 53:7). 13 Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing

⁵⁹ Blomberg, "Matthew," 33.

⁶⁰ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 112–13.

⁶¹ Blomberg, "Matthew," 97.

⁶² Blomberg, "Matthew," 97–98.

against you?” 14 But Jesus **made no reply, not even to a single charge** (Isa 53:7)—to the great amazement of the governor.

15 Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. 16 At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. 17 So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, “Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” 18 For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.”

20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

21 “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” asked the governor.

“Barabbas,” they answered.

22 “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked.

They all answered, “Crucify him!”

23 “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and **washed his hands** (Ps 26:6) in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!”

25 All the people answered, “**His blood is on us and on our children**” (Lev 20:9-16; Ezek 33:5)!

26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus **flogged** (Isa 50:6), and handed him over to be crucified.

27 Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

32 As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. 33 They came to a place called Golgotha (which means “the place of the skull”). 34 There they offered Jesus **wine to drink, mixed with gall** (Ps 69:21); but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. 35 When they had crucified him, **they divided up his clothes by casting lots** (Ps 22:18). 36 And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. 37 Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 **Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left** (Isa 53:12). 39 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, **shaking their heads** (Ps 22:7) 40 and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” 41 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 42 “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God. **Let God rescue him** (Ps 22:8) now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” 44 In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

45 From noon until three in the afternoon **darkness came over all the land** (Exod 10:22; Joel 2:10; Amos 8:9). 46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “**Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?**” (which means “**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**”) (Ps 22:1).

47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

48 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with **wine vinegar** (Ps 69:21), put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 49 The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split 52 and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53 **They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people** (Dan 12:12; Ezek 37:12).

54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus **saw the earthquake** (Zech 14:4-5) and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

55 Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. 56 Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

Matthew, in narrating Jesus’ death, is most influenced by two Old Testament passages: Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and Psalm 22. He artfully weaves together some common themes shared by both of these texts. Psalm 22 is a Psalm of David in which he expresses deep lament because of the persecution from his enemies. David’s life is spared and in vv. 22-31 the despondent tune of the Psalm erupts into praise.⁶³ Jesus exemplifies David in his suffering; although, unlike David whose life is spared in the Psalm, Jesus suffers a

⁶³ Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 2nd ed., WBC, vol. 19 (Nashville: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2004), 202–3, Logos Bible Software.

humiliating death.⁶⁴ Isaiah tells us that this death is actually “an offering for sin” (Isa 53:10), yet not for his sin but the sin of his people. By using echoes of Psalm 22 and Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Matthew interlaces the suffering of David and the suffering of the servant in the person of Jesus. Jesus is the suffering Servant King.

Opening Questions

- 1) Have you ever read a story or watched a movie where the villain seems to dodge justice? How do you feel when the hero finally gets the upper hand?
- 2) Have you ever been the victim of injustice? What was this experience like? Was there a resolution?

Read

Old Testament

Psalm 22

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

New Testament

Matthew 27:11-56

Explore

- 1) Read Psalm 22. Note all of the imagery that resembles the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus. How does David’s experience of suffering compare to Jesus’ experience of crucifixion?
- 2) Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Isaiah answers the following question: How will God deal with the sin of the nations and his own people (see also Isa 49:6-7)?⁶⁵ What is Isaiah’s answer?

⁶⁴ Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, 203.

⁶⁵ Gary Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, NAC, vol. 15B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 434, Logos Bible Software.

- 3) By using both Psalm 22 and the Suffering Servant song in Isaiah to illustrate Jesus' crucifixion, what is Matthew telling us about Jesus' identity?
- 4) One of Isaiah's emphases is on the redemption of the nations—that the good news would go beyond the border of Israel. How does this impact your reading of Matthew 27:54 (Taking note of the role of the Gentile Roman centurion)?⁶⁶
- 5) At the crucifixion, Matthew presents Jesus as the King who is going to bring justice to the nations by offering forgiveness of sins—the Suffering Servant King. In this light, re-read Matthew 27:11-56.⁶⁷ Note the irony that Jesus is mocked as a king and unjustly executed. What emotion does this evoke for you?
- 6) When Jesus dies, many “holy people” in Jerusalem came to life (v. 52). What does this tell you about the theological significance of Jesus' crucifixion? See also Matthew 20:28 and Romans 5:15-21.⁶⁸

Apply

- 1) Jesus (the Davidic King, the Servant, the Son of God, and the one who fulfills the promise made to Abraham) is abandoned by God, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Note that Jesus does not refer to God as “Father” (i.e. broken relationship), and yet he still cries out “my God” (i.e. a cry of faith).⁶⁹ Jesus experienced abandonment in your place. What is your response to such radical sacrifice?
- 2) Picture yourself as a disciple at the crucifixion scene, hiding behind the infuriated mob with the disfigured Jesus hanging in the distance. What do you think you would have been feeling?
- 3) Have you ever felt abandoned by God? What hope can you glean from Psalm 22 and the crucifixion of Jesus?

⁶⁶ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 256.

⁶⁷ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 253.

⁶⁸ Jeannine Brown, *Matthew*, TTCS (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2015), 312.

⁶⁹ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1076–77.

- 4) If the glory of God was revealed through the suffering of the Son of God, what can you expect to face as a follower of Jesus?

Application Reflection

Familiarity can breed complacency. It is easy to be so acquainted with a passage of Scripture that it loses its impact and you miss the nuances and details of the text. For this upcoming week, spend some more time in Matthew 27:11-56. Read the other Old Testament references previously highlighted if you have not done so already. How do those Old Testament references add richness and depth to your understanding of the crucifixion scene? How do they challenge some of your long-held assumptions?

The crucifixion models kingdom values. At the center of this kingdom is a cross with a crucified and mocked King. Jesus' kingdom is a radically different kingdom than the kingdoms of our world which often showcase their military power or political prowess (Matt 5-7; 20:20-28). And yet we who call ourselves followers of Jesus often jockey for power in our families and workplaces. We place our trust in politicians who make promises of lasting change often at the expense of others. We try to solve problems using the principles of this world, rather than the values of the kingdom. Reflect upon your own life. Where is your life more in line with the values of earthly "kingdoms" rather than the values of the kingdom of the Crucified?

Application Challenge

How can you follow Jesus by picking up your cross in your family, workplace, and school (Matthew 16:24)? Identify one way you can lay down your own rights for another person this week?

For Further study

For further study on why Jesus' suffering is the central theme of the biblical story and his role as Messiah, watch the following video:

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/the-messiah/>.

THE KING OF NEW CREATION

Background Reading

There are many events that have changed the course of world history. One could speak of Octavian's defeat of Marc Antony or Constantine's Edict of Milan as shaping an empire. The Protestant Reformation forever changed Christendom. The French Revolution has become memorialized in Broadway musicals like *Les Misérables*. World War I and II reshaped political territories and challenged the worldview of human achievement. September 11, 2001 made "terrorism" a common household word. But there is only one event that divided world history. There is only one event that can take the title for separating the human experience into two ages.⁷⁰ The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is an event of cosmic significance and a transition from the old age to the world to come.

When the women arrive at Joseph of Arimathea's tomb just outside the walls of first century Jerusalem, they never imagined that they were at the location where world history would be forever changed. Mary Magdalene and the "other Mary" encounter an open tomb and a heavenly figure and they are commissioned to go and tell the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead (Matt 28:7).⁷¹ When they are on the road back to their Jerusalem residence, the risen Jesus meets them and commands them to go and proclaim to the disciples all that had happened (Matt 28:10). The disciples were to make an eighty-mile journey from Jerusalem to Galilee where they would meet Jesus. Imagine the conversations that would have taken place among the eleven during that four to five-day

⁷⁰ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 36–37.

⁷¹ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 259–60.

journey to Galilee. Imagine the excitement, fears, doubts, and questions that filled the conversations.

When Jesus meets the disciples in Galilee, Matthew gives us surprisingly little information. He does not record any dialogue among the disciples. The only report Matthew gives is that some “worshipped” and some “doubted” (28:17). Commentators have pointed out that this is the same reaction when Jesus walks on the water to meet the disciples in the middle of the lake (Matt 14:31, 33).⁷² Even in the presence of the risen Jesus, the disciples respond in “worship” (Greek: *proskuneo*) and “doubt” (Greek: *distazo*). We can take great encouragement in that Jesus commissions the disciples to be his representatives even though they were not unified in their understanding and response to his resurrection.⁷³

The significance of the Great Commission cannot be overstated. In fact, Matthew scholar, R.T. France, says that the Great Commission is central to the Gospel of Matthew.⁷⁴ This is a big statement, but as you explore Matthew 28:16-20 this week, you will see that this is not overstated. Matthew packs so much into these five verses that it is easy to miss if we don’t read carefully. My hope is that you would see your mission as a disciple with greater clarity after exploring this pivotal passage. I hope that you see how your mission as a disciple connects to the larger storyline of Scripture that was introduced in the first week.

In the Great Commission, Matthew pulls together many themes that we have explored throughout this study. I will provide you with some background on these themes so that you can explore them in greater depth in your group study.

⁷² France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1110.

⁷³ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 262.

⁷⁴ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1108–9.

New Moses

Mountains play an important role in the Gospel of Matthew. The devil led Jesus up a “very high mountain” to tempt him with the kingdoms (Matt 4:8). It is on a mountain that Jesus gives the Sermon on the Mount—the law of the kingdom (Matthew 5:1). It is on a mountain that Jesus is transfigured before the disciples revealing his identity (Matt 17:1). And it is on a mountain that Jesus commissions the disciples. Toward the end of Moses’ life, he commissions Joshua to take the Israelites into the promised land (Deut 31:14-15) and he does so atop Mt. Nebo in the Transjordan. Moses’ life ends on Mt. Nebo and Joshua will continue his ministry to the people. Jesus is a greater Moses because unlike Moses who dies and stays dead, Jesus lives and continues his ministry through his disciples.⁷⁵ Jesus is a greater Moses who will lead Jew and Gentile alike into a greater Promised Land—the new creation.

The Son of Man is the Son of David

Daniel 7:13-14 presents a mysterious “son of man” figure, a figure to whom Jesus refers on a number of occasions in the Gospel of Matthew (Matt 16:28; 19:28; 24:30-31; 25:31-34).⁷⁶ In one of Daniel’s visions, he sees the heavenly courtroom and the son of man ascending into heaven into the presence of the “Ancient of Days” (Daniel 7:13). This son of man is given “authority” and “all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him” (Dan 7:13-14). The son of man is also given “dominion” and an eternal “kingdom.”

There are many striking similarities between the Great Commission and this son of man passage in Daniel. Like the son of man, Jesus is given “all authority” (Matt 28:18). Just as the son of man becomes the focal point of all nations, the disciples are to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19). The son of man receives worship and honor,

⁷⁵ Blomberg, “Matthew,” 100.

⁷⁶ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1113.

and the disciples worship Jesus (Matt 28:17). Just as the son of man receives an everlasting kingdom, Jesus will be present with his disciples “to the very end of the age,” another way of saying forever (Matt 28:20).⁷⁷

Daniel’s vision was of the new creation, when the son of man would rule over all peoples, and that vision had become a reality in the person of Jesus Christ.⁷⁸ The fulfillment of Daniel’s vision also fulfilled the promise made to the Davidic king, that he would “inherit” the nations (Ps 2:8). In a mysterious way, Jesus is both the Son of David and the Son of Man.

Your Mission as a Continuation of the Story

Think back to lesson one. Jesus was a fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that “all people on earth will be blessed through you.” Jesus commissions his disciples to go and make disciples of “all nations.” The promise originally made to Abraham would come to fulfillment through the mission of Jesus’ disciples. Because Jesus has acquired all of the nations and has all authority, he is able to send the disciples out.⁷⁹ There are no people or place that do not fall under Jesus’ jurisdiction. We need to view the commissioning of the disciples and our own commissioning in light of these various threads that Matthew pulls together (the Son of Man, the Son of David, the new Moses, and the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham). As followers of Jesus, we are sent out as disciple-making representatives of the new creation’s King. We are a continuation of this large biblical drama in our role as disciple-makers. The reason we can have such confidence is because Jesus is “Immanuel” (Matthew 1:23), he is God with us, and he promises to be with us until “the very end of

⁷⁷ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1112.

⁷⁸ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1113.

⁷⁹ Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 262–63.

the age” (Matt 28:20).

Opening Questions

- 1) What is the most significant historical event of your lifetime? What makes that event so significant?
- 2) What do you think the new creation will be like? Do you think the new creation will be a physical existence, a spiritual existence, or both?

Read

Old Testament

Daniel 7:1-28

New Testament

Matthew 28:16-20

Explore

- 1) Read Daniel 7:1-14. How is the son of man described in this courtroom drama? Where do you see evidence of multiple persons in the Godhead?
- 2) When Jesus tells the Sanhedrin that he is the “Son of Man” (Matt 26:63b-65) the court charges him with blasphemy. What does this tell you about the way first century Jews viewed the son of man?⁸⁰
- 3) Read Matthew 28:16-20. What does it mean that Jesus has all authority “in heaven and on earth”? How can Jesus’ ultimate authority give you confidence as a disciple?
- 4) Right after Jesus declares his authority he says, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” How is the call to make disciples “of all nations” connected to Jesus’ role as the divine “Son of Man”?

⁸⁰ Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, NAC, vol. 18 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 209, Logos Bible Software.

- 5) Jesus gives two ways we are to make disciples: to baptize in the name of the Trinitarian God, and to teach obedience. How should Jesus' universal authority inform the way you think about baptism and teaching obedience?
- 6) Jesus promises his abiding presence, "to the very end of the age." What does this tell you about who God is?

Apply

- 1) When the eleven disciples see Jesus in Galilee, Matthew says there was a mixed reaction of worship and doubt. What do you think your reaction would be if you were part of the eleven?
- 2) If Jesus has all authority, that means he has authority over your workplace or school, your family, your leisure activities, etc. With this in mind, does this change the way you think about your work, family, and leisure?
- 3) Jesus leaves no room for non-disciplemaking Christians. Why do you think so many Christians view disciplemaking as an option rather than a central part of the Christian identity?
- 4) As we examined above, Jesus is the king over new creation. This means as his followers we are citizens of new creation. How can we ensure that our identity as new creation citizens—citizens of the kingdom of God—takes precedence over our citizenship to any earthly nation?

Application Reflection

Over the past few years I have come to a greater realization of just how important Jesus' lordship and the new creation are for discipleship. I am convinced that we fail to make disciples in the way Jesus calls us to if we don't consider these two realities.

It is clear from Matthew 28:16-20 that Jesus has received all authority—over everything in heaven and everything on earth. We should find in this both an encouragement and a challenge. We should be encouraged because there is no place we

can go that is outside of Christ's domain. I remember the first time I left the country by myself to head to the Middle East. When I entered the terminal of the foreign airport, I was immediately struck with the reality that I was far from home. Or to say it another way, I wasn't in Kansas anymore. I was outside the protective domain of United States territory. But unlike with international travel, there is no place we can go in this world, or universe for that matter, that is outside Christ's realm. In this we can take great comfort.

But when Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to" him, we find in this a challenge as well. This means we can't compartmentalize our life. Jesus is just as much Lord in your workplace as he is at church. He doesn't set aside his scepter in your home or in your times of leisure. Jesus' lordship is the grounds for whole-life discipleship. We are called to both live as disciples and to call people to discipleship in every aspect of life.

As you saw from Matthew's echo of Daniel 7:13-14 there is also a hint of the new creation in this passage. Followers of Jesus are people of the new creation—the kingdom of God. This means that as new creation people, our lives should reflect the values and ethics of the kingdom of God, values and priorities that are found throughout Jesus' teaching in the Gospels. We are to give a foretaste to those around us of what the kingdom will be like in its fullness.

Application Challenge

Over the past few weeks you have explored the rich complexity of the Gospel of Matthew. My hope is that you have come to see Jesus afresh, and that you have been inspired to take notice of how all four Gospels use the Old Testament.

Your final challenge is to tell someone about Jesus this week. It could be a coworker, family member, or friend. We do not merely want to study Jesus; we want to be obedient to what he says. So go proclaim the good news. And as you go, trust that our risen Lord will be with you always!

For Further study

For further study on the son of man, watch the following video:

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/son-of-man/>

APPENDIX 6

FACILITATOR TRAINING INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

The following is the instructor guide that was developed for the facilitator training. The goal of the facilitator training was to introduce participants to the theological themes and equip facilitators to utilize the curriculum.

SESSION 1: THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF STORY

There are two goals that I hope to accomplish in our time together. First, I hope that you see the role the Gospel of Matthew plays in forming us as disciples. As human beings we are deeply shaped by story, and as you will come to see, the Gospel of Matthew tells us a larger story about God, the world, and ourselves. To use the language of Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen, the Gospel of Matthew gives us an “understanding of our *whole* world and of our own place within it.”¹ The second goal of this three session training is to equip you to utilize the small group curriculum that you will be piloting in your small group over the next couple of weeks: *Treasures Old and New: The Story of the Bible in the Gospel of Matthew*. Through this curriculum you will explore in greater detail what we will be discussing in this training.

This training is part of my Doctor of Ministry project, but it also serves as a pilot training for what I hope will become a regular part of our small group leadership training program which we are calling, “Thrive.” This training is part of a larger training process—each training addressing an aspect of our mission statement: “Building relationships, seeing Jesus transform lives.”

In this first learning community, we will focus on three things:

1. The Transforming Power of Story
2. The Gospel of Matthew and Biblical Theology
3. Biblical Theology and Worldview Formation

¹ Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 18.

The Transforming Power of Story

Group Activity – 5 min.

- Turn to the person next to you and introduce yourself by using something from your purse or wallet (e.g. driver’s license, library card, kids’ pictures, etc.).

Almost undoubtedly you chose to share a very brief story to introduce yourself to your neighbor. We are “story-shaped” beings. In fact, it is not possible to think of ourselves outside of some larger story.

Consider the last time you saw a movie or read a gripping book (for me, it was the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy). A good story has rich character development (you know the backstories that contribute to the larger story of the movie). All stories have a rising tension, a climax, and then a falling action and conclusion.² A great story pulls you into the larger drama.

In every political election cycle, the rhetoric increases, friends and families are sometimes divided, people become entrenched in whatever political camp they associate with. A political party crafts their candidate’s proposed solution to the world’s problems in the form of story.

Stories play a role on an individual level in the day-to-day issues we face as well. If we lose a job, go through a tragedy, or go through life cycle events (e.g. weddings, funerals), we tend to think of these experiences in light of some larger story.³

In other words, what all this communicates is that we live within a particular worldview—a particular outlook on life, a story that frames the way that we see reality. This story is referred to as a “metanarrative” a large story that we believe that gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

² Jonathan T. Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 173.

³ Paul G. Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 29.

Listen to what missiologist Paul Hiebert says about worldviews:

Worldviews are not foundational ideas, feelings, and values, but ‘worlds’ that are inhabited—what Peter Berger calls ‘sacred canopies’ that provide a cover of protection for life under which making homes, shaping communities, and sustaining life can take place.⁴

You can also think of a worldview as a particular *lens* through which you view the world. It is the grid through which you interpret events. Let us illustrate this through an activity.

Group Activity

- Show picture of World Trade Center memorial. Ask participants to write down in a few sentences what story comes to mind.
- Provide the opportunity for participants to share their responses.

Each of you nuanced your description of this picture in a certain way. Some of you emphasized freedom. For others, the image evokes the horrific events of September 11, 2001. Even though you are looking at the same picture you are viewing the picture through a particular lens, through a particular story.

A worldview has been described as a “core belief.”⁵ It is “core” because it always informs our actions.⁶ Allow me to illustrate. Driving causes some of my ugly side to come out. Let’s say that someone recklessly cuts me off in traffic and my response is anything but a *Christian* response. We can peel the layers to the core issue of my response by asking the question every toddler is an expert at asking: WHY?

Peeling the Layers

- Why did I respond with unkind thoughts or words?

⁴ Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*, 28.

⁵ Klaus Dieter Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus: The Formation of Christian Character* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 28.

⁶ Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus*, 31–32.

- Because I don't like it when people break the law and get away with it.
- Why don't I like it when people break the law and get away with it?
 - Because people should get what they deserve.
- Why should people get what they deserve?
 - Because that is how life should work. If you obey the rules, you are rewarded; if you break the rules you are punished.

The one incident of getting cut off in traffic can reveal a fundamental core belief—a very transactional legalist approach to life. We can even dig a little deeper:

- Why do I view life in a very transactional, legalist way?
 - Because this is how I view authority figures, you break the rules and there are consequences—there is no grace.
- Where does this view of authority figures come from?
 - Possibly from authority figures in my childhood.
 - A wrongheaded view of God: our relationship with God is transactional, it is about works not grace.

Now hear me clearly, this is not what I believe in my mind. But more often than not, it is what I believe in my heart. It is what bubbles to the surface, and it is something that God is slowly changing in me. However, at this moment, it is my actual worldview and it informs my thoughts and behavior.

Illustration

- Squeeze a water bottle until the water gushes forth. Life's circumstances can reveal the contents of our heart—our core beliefs.

Dallas Willard in his book, *The Divine Conspiracy*, speaks about the difference between stated and actual beliefs. Regarding “genuine beliefs,” Willard says,

We often speak of people not living up to their faith. But the cases in which we say this are not really cases of people behaving otherwise than they believe. They are cases in which genuine beliefs are made obvious by what people do. We always live up to our beliefs—or down to them, as the case may be. Nothing else is possible. It

is the nature of belief.⁷

In other words, what Willard is saying is that our actions always flow from what we actually believe. Is this not what Jesus himself said? “By their fruit you will recognize them” (Matt 7:16 NIV).

Group Activity

- I want you to take a moment to go through the same exercise that I just did. Take a recent event where you responded out of the core of who you are—it doesn’t have to be negative. I want you to ask the why question until you can’t ask it anymore. Why did you respond in the way that you did?

This is the level where transformation takes place. In order to be transformed, we want to be transformed by the biblical story. We want what Klaus Issler calls “inner heart formation.”⁸ We want those deepest beliefs—our core beliefs to be transformed.⁹ I am not talking about cognitive beliefs (of course we want those to be changed too), but I am talking about those deepest beliefs, the beliefs that gush to the surface when we least expect.

Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen remind us that a larger story is not only responsible for smaller day-to-day decisions; it is also something that is communicated at a larger cultural level. Oftentimes it is these larger cultural stories that have a great influence on what we truly believe.¹⁰ If we are not careful, we may not even be aware of the stories that we are believing. Timothy Keller says that these larger stories (i.e. worldviews) answer three fundamental questions:

“How are things supposed to be?”

⁷ Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperOne, 1997), 307.

⁸ Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus*, 35.

⁹ Issler, *Living into the Life of Jesus*, 28.

¹⁰ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 19–20.

“What is the main problem with things as they are?”

“What is the solution and how can it be realized?”¹¹

Everyone asks these three questions whether they realize it or not. In order to be an effective witness in the world, it is important that we know some of the predominant worldviews in our culture and how they answer these fundamental questions.

Group Activity

- Discuss at your tables: what are the most dominant cultural stories around us today? How would these cultural stories answer these three questions?

Watch

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/how-to-read-the-bible/>

The Biblical Story

Lesslie Newbigin, the famous missionary to India, recounted a conversation he had with one of his Hindu friends. His friend recognized that the Bible was—at a fundamental level—different than any other religious book. He called the Bible a “universal history.”¹² Newbigin says that the Bible, “sets before us a vision of cosmic history from the creation of the world to its consummation...The Bible is universal history.”¹³ What is this “universal history” that the Bible communicates? What is the story that should shape our core beliefs?

Another way of thinking through the biblical story is through the lens of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation. Each of these chapters can be read with two

¹¹ Timothy Keller, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 160.

¹² Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 89, Logos Bible Software.

¹³ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 89.

particular focuses. Christopher Wright says that, “The proper way for disciples of the crucified and risen Jesus to read their Scriptures, is *messianically and missionally*.”¹⁴ In other words what he is saying is that we need to read the Bible with one eye toward how all of the Scripture points to Jesus (Luke 24:44-49). Through the other eye we need to see that the entire Scripture is about God’s mission to restore humanity. The entire Bible is about God’s grace and “mission” to restore fallen humanity and a groaning world. It is about God restoring his reign, or to use the words of Jesus—the “gospel of the kingdom” (Matt 4:23 ESV).

We could summarize all that we have discussed so far with the following three statements:

- Everyone believes some larger story (i.e. metanarrative of the world).
- Metanarrative informs our core beliefs (those beliefs that inform our actions).
- Our core beliefs should be shaped by a biblical metanarrative.

¹⁴ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 30.

SESSION 2: THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW AND BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

In the first section, we explored the role of story in our formation. We concluded that we live out of our core beliefs. We also examined the biblical story, the story that arcs from creation to new creation. We are going to look at this story in a little more depth and specifically how the Gospel of Matthew tells this story. To read the Bible as a larger story intersects with a discipline known as biblical theology. Michael Lawrence defines biblical theology as “the attempt to tell the whole story of the whole Bible as Christian Scripture.”¹⁵ To read the entire Bible as “Christian Scripture” is to see a larger story that focuses on the person of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of Matthew invites us to understand the entire Bible as Christian Scripture; in other words, the Gospel of Matthew does biblical theology. He teaches us how to read Scripture through his frequent quotations and subtle references to our Old Testament (Matthew’s Scriptures, the New Testament was not finished nor compiled by the time of Matthew’s writing). In our time together I want to help teach you how to read the Gospel of Matthew while paying attention to how he uses the Old Testament. Then in the last session, we will look at why Matthew’s approach toward biblical theology is important for discipleship. Through this training you will have the background and knowledge to be able to effectively lead your small group through the curriculum, *Treasures Old and New: The Story of the Bible in the Gospel of Matthew*. So, here is how we are going to structure our time:

¹⁵ Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 89.

First, we will look at what a Gospel is. We need to answer this question before we can adequately study the Gospel of Matthew. Second, we will explore general principles of how Matthew uses the Old Testament. Finally, we will look at an example of how Matthew uses the Old Testament.

What is a Gospel

The word, “gospel” (εὐαγγέλιον), can be described as a verbal proclamation of good news. It was used to celebrate an emperor’s birth or his victory over an enemy.¹⁶ It was also used from the beginning days of Christianity to speak about the “good news” of Jesus Christ.¹⁷ Early on in the history of the church, gospel, became attached to written documents about Jesus Christ.¹⁸ Why did these early Christians decide on this term to describe Jesus’ ministry? Most likely they were drawing on the term’s rich Old Testament background. In particular it is used in the last section of Isaiah (chapters 40-66).¹⁹ Listen to some of these verses:

Isaiah 40:9

You who bring good news to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
say to the towns of Judah,
“Here is your God” (NIV)!

¹⁶ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 5.

¹⁷ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 5.

¹⁸ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 6–7.

¹⁹ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 15–16.

Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
“Your God reigns” (NIV).

Isaiah 61:1-2a

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor (NIV).

Watch

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/gospel-kingdom/>

By using the term “gospel,” Matthew is providing a major hint that what follows is the continuation, or fulfillment of what had long been anticipated.²⁰ As a continuation of this Old Testament story,²¹ it makes sense then that Matthew would frequently cite and echo the Old Testament Scriptures. As we will come to see, he does

²⁰ For a helpful resource on gospel genre, see, L. W. Hurtado, “Gospel (Genre),” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 276–82.

²¹ Richard B Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 106.

so in very surprising ways.

Matthew's use of the Old Testament

There are five concepts we need to keep in mind as we explore how Matthew used the Old Testament:

1. Old Testament Thought World: Familiarize yourself with the Old Testament.²²
2. Quotation and Echo
 1. Identifying a Quotation: Introduction formula or nearly identical wording
 2. Identifying an Echo: similar words/sentence structure and/or theme/concepts
3. Larger Context²³
4. Canonical Story (Creation, Fall, Redemption, New Creation)²⁴
5. “Reading backwards:” (Typology: events, persons, places, etc. that take on new meaning when read through the lens of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ)²⁵

Old Testament Thought World

As twenty-first century readers it is easy to forget the importance and significance of the Old Testament—the Hebrew Scriptures—for the biblical writers. They were steeped in them and their Scriptures informed the way they thought. It was a shared *thought world*. This is not to say that there was unanimous agreement on everything in the Scriptures, or that everyone thought about them in the same way; but there was a shared language. We experience a similar phenomenon in different ways. For example, the popular television series that “everyone” is watching forms a shared thought world among the viewers.

²² Patrick Schreiner, *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe: The First Gospel and Its Portrait of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 54, Kindle.

²³ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 107.

²⁴ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 105.

²⁵ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 104.

Quotation and Echo

Matthew uses specific quotations in his Gospel. Many times, he will introduce a quotation with a phrase like, “And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet...” (Matt 2:15 NIV), or “This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah...” (Matt 3:3 NIV). Some estimate that there are around fifty-four to fifty-five quotations and 262 echoes to the Old Testament in the Gospel of Matthew.²⁶

While quotations are easier to identify, echoes are more challenging. Greg Beale provides a helpful pattern for identifying echoes. He says it is “recognizing an *incomparable or unique parallel in wording, syntax, concept, or cluster of motifs in the same order or structure.*”²⁷ An echo is not a direct quotation, but it is recognizing that there is an intentional parallel between words, syntax, concepts, etc. An echo means that a New Testament passage will share words/sentence structure and/or themes/concepts with an Old Testament passage. If a NT passage contains similar words/sentence structure and themes/concepts we can be more confident that we have identified a true echo.²⁸

Larger Context

We need to keep in mind the surrounding context of the OT passage that is quoted.²⁹ By doing the hard work of exploring the original context of a passage, we can sometimes have a greater understanding of the theological significance of the New Testament event.

²⁶ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 10–11, Logos Bible Software; Craig Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids; Nottingham: Baker Academic, 2007), 1, Logos Bible Software.

²⁷ G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 31.

²⁸ Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 31–32.

²⁹ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 107.

Canonical Story

Scripture is to be viewed as a unifying story.³⁰ This story is “comprehensive” in its scope (from creation to new creation).³¹ The Gospel of Matthew views Jesus in light of this comprehensive narrative. For this reason, it is important to consider where a particular echo or quotation falls in light of the larger story. In this regard it can helpful to think of the Bible in larger chapters. The often noted pattern of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation is a helpful place to begin. When identifying an echo in the Old Testament, pay attention to where in redemptive history the quotation is found.

Reading Backwards

This is one of the most important ideas that we need to address. The idea of reading backwards comes from, Richard Hays. The Gospel writers like Matthew “read backwards” because they see the Scriptures in light of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.³² By “reading backwards,” NT authors often see the fuller meaning intended by God as the divine Author. This fuller meaning was not necessarily on the radar of the human writer.³³

Typology is one of the primary ways that the New Testament uses the Old Testament.³⁴ Typology is when “events, persons, and institutions” are connected to later events, persons, and/or institutions, where the latter is more significant. Quite often a biblical writer will pick up a theme and reveal a greater theological meaning and

³⁰ Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 31.

³¹ Bartholomew and Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, 20.

³² Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 104.

³³ Darrell L. Bock, “Single Meaning, Multiple Contexts and Referents: The New Testament’s Legitimate, Accurate, and Multifaceted Use of the Old,” in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Darrel L. Bock, Peter Enns, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 106–7, Logos Bible Software.

³⁴ Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 75.

“significance” in light of Jesus Christ.³⁵ Take King David for instance. David was the model king for ancient Israel. In the New Testament Jesus is likened to King David, but in a greater way. Or take the land promise to Abraham (Gen 12). In the Old Testament, the land promise had specific geographical borders, but in the New Testament the land promise expands to encompass the whole earth.

Without strict criteria, this idea could easily be abused. I find the following criteria to be helpful. The relation between the type and antitype must be:

1. “Real” and “historical”
2. Intended by God
3. Incomplete, the type wants a greater fulfillment³⁶

Case Study

We are going to practice identifying and interpreting a passage utilizing the six criteria below:

1. Old Testament Thought World
 - Familiarize yourself with the Old Testament
 - Are there themes/concepts in the passage that also appear in the Old Testament?
 - Explore cross reference system
2. Quotation and Echo
 - Does the New Testament passage have an OT quotation (Identifying a Quotation: Introduction formula or identical to nearly identical wording)?
 - Does the New Testament passage have an OT echo (Identifying an Echo: similar words/sentence structure and/or theme/concepts)?
3. Larger OT Context

³⁵ Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 77.

³⁶ Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 78.

- Does the context of the OT passage clarify the meaning of the OT quotation or echo?³⁷
4. Canonical Story
- Where does the OT quotation/echo fall in the larger storyline of Scripture (creation, fall, redemption, new creation)?³⁸
5. “Reading backwards”
- How does the person of Jesus Christ shed new meaning on an OT passage? How does an OT passage help us better understand Jesus (consider typology: events, persons, places, etc. that take on new meaning when read through the lens of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ)? The relation between the type and antitype must be:
 1. “Real” and “historical.”
 2. Intended by God
 3. Incomplete, it wants a greater fulfillment³⁹
6. Conclusions⁴⁰
- What is the theological meaning/s of my findings?
 - How should this impact the way that I live?

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

¹⁵ Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

³⁷ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 107.

³⁸ Pennington, *Reading the Gospels Wisely*, 207.

³⁹ Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 78.

⁴⁰ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 108-109.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (NIV).

Thought World

Are there key words or phrases that would point us to the Old Testament? This is challenging for modern readers because we are removed from the first century world, and quite honestly, we do not know our Old Testaments very well. To improve in this skill, we want to immerse ourselves in the Old Testament text.⁴¹ Another tool that can be helpful is to get a good Bible cross reference system. A good study Bible will usually contain a good cross-reference.

Are there themes/concepts in the passage that also appear in the Old Testament?

- “Heaven was opened” (v. 16)
- “Spirit of God descending like a dove” (v. 16)
- “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (v. 17)

Quotation and Echo

Does the New Testament passage have an OT quotation (Identifying a Quotation: Introduction formula or identical to nearly identical wording)?

- No quotation in this passage

Does the New Testament passage have an OT echo (Identifying an Echo: similar words/sentence structure and/or theme/concepts)?

- There are at least two echoes to the Old Testament:
 - “Spirit of God descending like a dove” (v. 16)
 - Isaiah 11:2 – “The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD” (NIV).

⁴¹ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, xii.

- Meets criteria of similar words and concepts
- “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (v. 17)
- Psalm 2:7 – “I will proclaim the LORD’s decree: He said to me, “You are my son; today I have become your father” (NIV).
 - Meets criteria of similar word and concept/theme
- Isaiah 42:1 - “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations” (NIV).
 - Meets criteria of similar words/structure and concept/theme

Larger OT Context

Does the context of the OT passage clarify the meaning of the OT quotation or echo?

- Isaiah 11:2
 - Isaiah anticipates one who is going to come from the line of David (11:1) upon whom the Spirit of the Lord will rest.
 - This promise is set within the context of the destruction of Israel’s enemies and a return of a remnant (Isa 10:20-34; 11:11-12)
- Psalm 2:7
 - Psalm 2 is a coronation Psalm for the king of Israel.
 - The king is described as God’s anointed (2:2)
 - God will give the nations to the Davidic king as his inheritance (2:8)
- Isaiah 42:1
 - Located in the last portion of Isaiah (chapters 40-66). The servant of the Lord would bring “justice” to his people (42:6)
 - Isaiah 40-66 focuses on the theme of the future restoration of Israel and ultimately the world.

Canonical Story

Where does the OT quotation/echo fall in the larger storyline of Scripture (creation, fall, redemption, new creation)?

- Isaiah 11:2
 - Isaiah looks forward to the restoration of the people of Israel. But in this there is also an eschatological hope (11:6-9)—restoration is brought to all of creation. In other words, Isaiah looks forward to new creation ushered in by a king from David's line.
- Psalm 2:7
 - The original context is the coronation of Israel's kings. But there is an expectation (i.e. acquiring the nations) that was never realized by any Davidic king. In this sense there is a forward looking (i.e. new creation) aspect to this passage.
- Isaiah 42:1
 - Like Isaiah 11:2, this passage is also forward looking to a time when justice would be established through the servant.

Reading Backwards

How does the person of Jesus Christ shed new meaning on an OT passage? How does an OT passage help us better understand Jesus (*consider typology: events, persons, places, etc. that take on new meaning when read through the lens of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ*)?

- Isaiah 11:2
 - When Matthew says that the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus, he is drawing the reader's attention to Isaiah 11:2. Jesus is the one who comes from the line of Jesse. He is the one who is going to bring his people out of exile (Isa 11:16). As we read on in Matthew, we come to see that the type of exodus that Jesus leads is a spiritual exodus—from a much more profound captivity. Jesus is also the one who is going to usher in the eschatological vision of Isaiah (11:6).

- Psalm 2:7
 - Jesus is described as the “Son,” in other words he is the Davidic King who will acquire the nations as his possession (Ps 2:8). Interestingly this is the subject of the last temptation Jesus experiences in the wilderness (Matt 4:8).
- Isaiah 42:1
 - Jesus is described using language used of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah. This will become a major theme in Matthew as Jesus takes on the role of the suffering servant (Matt 8:17; 12:18-21; 27:32-56).

Conclusions

What is the theological meaning/s of my findings?

Jesus is described as the servant of the Lord (a figure described in the book of Isaiah),⁴² the one who is going to bring restoration. But because he is the servant of the Lord, there is the anticipation that he is also the servant that will suffer on behalf of his people. In addition to the servant of the Lord, Jesus is described as the Davidic king who will restore his people and bring them out of exile. As we continue to read the Gospel of Matthew, we will learn that the type of exodus Jesus leads is much more profound than the original exodus. Combining our insights, we can describe Jesus as the Servant King who leads his people in a new exodus and the one who will remake creation.

How should this impact the way that I live?

We are reminded that Jesus is the one who is the anointed King—no one else! Because of this we should find our hope in him alone. Secondly, the Old Testament references paint a picture of what this servant King will accomplish. He is the one who is going to lead a new exodus (spiritual exodus) and the one who is going to remake creation. It gives us a correct vision for the future. So, in one sense understanding how

⁴² Jeannine Brown who was on my expert panel that reviewed this curriculum provided this insight (November 17, 2019).

Jesus is a continuation of the OT in Matthew 3:13-17 gives us a proper understanding of how we are to think about Jesus. But in another sense, it gives us a proper understanding of what we are to do. By recognizing Jesus as the anointed King, it helps us to manage our expectations of any earthly ruler. The temptation is to put too much confidence in our leaders. Matthew reminds us that we are to place our full confidence in Jesus as the anointed King, because no one else is.

SESSION 3: BIBLICAL THEOLOGY AND WORLDVIEW FORMATION

In this final session, we are going to address the questions that some may be thinking: “Who cares?” Why is it important that we understand how Matthew uses the Old Testament? What does this have to do with my daily life?

In the first session I introduced the idea of the transforming power of story—the idea that at a very fundamental level we believe a story about ourselves and our relationship to the world around us. In the previous session we looked at how Matthew invites us into a Christian reading of the whole Bible. He instructs us how to read the Bible as pointing to the person of Jesus Christ—in other words he teaches us how to do biblical theology.

I want to preface this last section with a very important question: where does biblical theology intersect with our core beliefs? The entire goal of this training and small group curriculum is to help you and your small group members understand that reading Matthew with an eye toward how he uses the Old Testament not only teaches you how to do biblical theology, but it shapes and forms your core beliefs about the world.

Story that Restructures our Core Beliefs

To address how biblical theology shapes forms our core beliefs/worldview, I want you at your tables to work through Matthew 21:1-11 and identify the significance of the Old Testament references that are either quoted or echoed.

Group Project

- Have group go through the intertextual identification process of Matthew 21:1-11 (Provide handout of my own work on this passage after they complete the exercise).

- Old Testament Thought World
- Quotation and Echo
- Larger Context
- Canonical Story
- Reading Backwards
- Conclusions

Matthew 21:1-11

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.” This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’” The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna in the highest heaven!” When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, “Who is this?” The crowds answered, “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee” (NIV).

Thought World

Are there themes/concepts in the passage that also appear in the Old Testament?

- What role does the Mt. of Olives play (Matt 21:1) in the Old Testament?

*Cross References*⁴³

- Matthew 21:1 (Zech 14:4)
- Matthew 21:5 (Isa 62:11; Zech 9:9)
- Matthew 21:8 (possibly 2 Kgs 9:13)
- Matthew 21:9 (Ps 118:25)

⁴³ These references come from NA28.

Quotation and Echo

Does the New Testament passage have an OT quotation (Identifying a Quotation:

Introduction formula or identical to nearly identical wording)?

- “This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet...” (v. 4). Matthew seems to combine Isaiah 62:11 and Zechariah 9:9.⁴⁴
 - Zechariah 9:9 – “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (NIV).
 - Isaiah 62:11 – “The LORD has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: “Say to Daughter Zion, ‘See, your Savior comes! See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him” (NIV).

Does the New Testament passage have an OT echo (Identifying an Echo: similar

words/sentence structure and/or theme/concepts)?

- “As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives” (v. 1)
 - Zechariah 14:4 – “On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south” (NIV).
- “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee” (v. 11)
 - The crowds refer to Jesus as “the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee” (Matt 21:11). The attentive reader should think back to Matthew 2:23, where we are told that the prophets said that Jesus would be called a Nazarene. Many scholars believe that this is a reference to Isaiah 11:1.

⁴⁴ Blomberg, “Matthew,” 63.

Larger Old Testament Context

Does the OT context of the quotation or echo clarify the meaning of the OT quotation or echo?

- Zechariah 9:9
 - Zechariah 9:1-8 speaks about judgment on Israel's surrounding enemies: Hadrak, Syria, Hamath, Tyre and Sidon, and the Philistine cities.
 - Zechariah 9:9-13 paints the picture of a coming humble king. The peace of this humble king will go out to the ends of the earth (v. 10).
- Isaiah 62:11
 - Isaiah 62 looks forward to a time when Jerusalem's enemies will be defeated, and the glory of Jerusalem will be showcased to the entire world. In verse 11, it is the Lord himself who is the Savior of Zion.
- Zechariah 14:4
 - Zechariah anticipates the day when the Lord would come to reign in Jerusalem and stand on the Mt. of Olives (v. 4). The Lord is described as "king over the whole earth" (v. 9 NIV).
 - The imagery in this chapter is very apocalyptic.
 - Jesus comes to Jerusalem and very intentionally comes over the Mt. of Olives prior to entering.
- Isaiah 11:1
 - It is possible that the Hebrew root behind Nazareth is the word for "branch" (Heb: nēšer). If this is the case, then Jesus is the "Branch" who comes from the "branch" city (see Matt 2:23).
 - The "Branch" will judge with righteousness (v. 4). The Branch is the one who will restore his people (vv. 10-11).
 - The "earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (v. 9 NIV).

Canonical Story

Where does the OT quotation/echo fall in the larger storyline of Scripture (creation, fall, redemption, new creation)?

- Zechariah 9:9; 14:4
 - Zechariah anticipates an eschatological restoration of Zion—a restoration that ultimately extends to all creation.
- Isaiah 62:11
 - Isaiah paints a picture of Zion’s restoration and the Lord will ultimately be the Savior of Zion.
- Isaiah 11:1
 - Isaiah 11 anticipates an eschatological king from the line of David who will rule.

Reading Backwards

How does the person of Jesus Christ shed new meaning on an OT passage? How does an OT passage help us better understand Jesus (consider typology: events, persons, places, etc. that take on new meaning when read through the lens of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ)?

- Zechariah 9:9; 14:4
 - Jesus is presented as the king of Zechariah 9:9. This king will “proclaim peace to the nations” and his “rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth” (Zech 9:10 NIV). When Jesus comes riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, this larger vision of the king—although subtle—is in view. Jesus is not just a humble king; he is the king who will rule over all creation.
- Isaiah 62:11
 - Because Matthew intentionally uses the first part of Isaiah 62:11 (Matt 21:5). Jesus is presented as Zion’s Savior and the one who will bring redemption.
- Isaiah 11:1

- When the people describe Jesus as “the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee” (Matt 21:11), the statement seems to be filled with more meaning than a simple geographical designation. Given the “royal” context, it would appear that Isaiah 11:1 is echoed in this passage. By nature of Jesus status as a “prophet from Nazareth,” it is possible to see Isaiah 11:1 behind this declaration (see also Matthew 2:23). Jesus is the “Branch” from the line of David.

Conclusion

What is the theological meaning/s of my findings?

Jesus is presented as the eschatological king who will not only bring restoration to Zion and to Israel, but he will be the one whose rule will extend to the ends of the earth. As the Gospel of Matthew progresses, we will find that expectations associated with Jesus’ royal status were at odds with the nature of Jesus’ kingdom. At Jesus’ crucifixion he is presented as “the King of the Jews” (Matt 27:37 NIV); but ironically, the way that he brings redemption is through his humiliation and crucifixion and not through military might.

Biblical Theology that Shapes Core Beliefs

So, what do our theological findings have to say for discipleship. We need to return to our worldview diagnostic questions we introduced in the first session. As a reminder, a worldview answers the following questions:

- “How are things supposed to be?”
- “What is the main problem with things as they are?”
- “What is the solution and how can it be realized?”⁴⁵

Jesus’ ride into Jerusalem is part of a much larger story. Let’s consider how a biblical theological understanding of Matthew 21:1-11 maps onto the worldview

⁴⁵ Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 160.

questions above:

1. How are things supposed to be?
 - Every nation should be brought under the rule and reign of God (see OT references).
 - The peace that accompanies God's rule should be visibly present among the nations.
2. What is the main problem with things as they are?
 - Although God is King over the universe, his reign is not recognized by the nations.
 - The peace that accompanies God's kingdom is not visibly present.
3. What is the solution and how can it be realized?
 - Jesus rides into Jerusalem as the humble king.
 - By connecting Jesus to the eschatological passages of Isaiah 62 and Zechariah 9, 14, Matthew presents Jesus as the king who will usher in the reign of God as anticipated by the prophets.
 - Of course, Jesus' exaltation in Matthew is ironically the moment when he is hung on the cross. This suggests that the type of kingdom that Jesus establishes is utterly different than worldly kingdoms that establish their power by military might. Jesus establishes his kingdom through self-sacrificial love.

Everyone views life through these worldview questions. For instance, these are the questions that frame our political rhetoric. These are the questions underlying our business problems and solutions. These are the questions we ask when confronted with family issues. To close our time, I want you to consider these worldview questions by choosing either the sphere of politics, family or work. How does our culture answer these questions? How does our understanding of the kingdom in Matthew 21 challenge and confront the way we are prone to answer these questions?

Group Discussion

How should Jesus' humble and universal kingship impact your understanding

of:

- Politics
- Family
- Work

APPENDIX 7

FACILITATOR TRAINING AGENDA

The following is the agenda with detailed times that I as the instructor used for the small group facilitator training on January 11, 2020.

Agenda for Learning Community

January 11, 2020

Welcome (9:00-9:10)

Details of the project (9:10-9:15)

- Survey
- Training
- Curriculum – Deadline by April 5
- Follow up interviews

Administer the survey (9:15-9:35)

Directions

- Survey needs to be completed prior to going through the curriculum
- Place pre-surveys in envelope and return to my mailbox at Calvary
- Once finished with curriculum re-administer the survey
- Place post-surveys in envelope and return to my mailbox at Calvary

Break (9:35-9:45)

Session 1 (9:45-10:30)

Break (10:30-10:45)

Session 2 (10:45-11:15)

Break (11:15-11:20)

Session 3 (11:20-12:00)

Closing Prayer (12:00-12:05)

APPENDIX 8

EMAIL INVITATION TO SMALL GROUP FACILITATORS

The following is the invitation that was sent to small group facilitators to be part of the training.

Experience the Gospel Learning Community and Small Group Curriculum

Consider the last time you went to a movie or read a captivating novel. What did you experience as you were invited into the plotline? As human beings we are deeply shaped and formed by story. This is why it is important for us to enter into the biblical story—the story that arcs from creation to new creation.

The Gospels are entryways into the big story God is crafting because they reveal Jesus as the central character. To read the Gospels well is to see how they connect Jesus to the Old Testament and to this larger storyline.

You as a small group facilitator are invited to be part of Experience the Gospel Learning Community to discover how the Gospels link Jesus to the big story and how your small group can be transformed by this story in every facet of life. This learning community includes a Saturday training experience (see details below) for small group facilitators, and a 5-week small group curriculum on how the Gospel of Matthew uses the Old Testament to pilot in your group. Because this is a Doctor of Ministry project you and your group will be kindly asked to take a brief survey before and after the curriculum.

As the date approaches, you will receive more details and information about this experience!

Weekend Learning Community Training

January 11, 2020 / 9:00-12:00 / Roseville Atrium

Small Group Curriculum

You and your small group will have between January 11, 2020 and March 15, 2020 to implement the curriculum.

APPENDIX 9

EMAIL INVITATION TO EXPERT PANEL

The following is the email invitation that was used to invite the expert panel.

Hi Dr. Brown,

I hope you are well. I am not sure if you remember me, but you were my M.Div. advisor while at Bethel Seminary. I am currently enrolled as a DMin student at Southern Seminary where Dan Gurtner is my faculty supervisor.

As the Discipleship Pastor at Calvary Church in Roseville I would like to focus my project on helping small groups become more informed readers of the Gospels—specifically how the Gospels’ use of the Old Testament can provide a theological foundation for discipleship.

The purpose of the project is stated as follows:

The purpose of this project is to train Calvary Church small group members to understand how the four Gospels use the Old Testament to establish a biblical theological foundation for whole-life discipleship.

I will argue this proposition in the following ways:

1. The Gospel writers interpret the person and ministry of Jesus through an Old Testament hermeneutical lens
2. The intertextual nature of the Gospels forms the biblical metanarrative foundation for discipleship and a Christological approach to spiritual formation.

For this project I will be developing a three-week small group leader training and a five-week small group curriculum on how the Gospel of Matthew uses the Old Testament and its relevance for discipleship. I am wondering if you would be interested and open to serving on an advisory committee (which will also consist of a Calvary elder board member and pastoral staff member) to provide feedback on these curriculums (ensuring they are theologically sound, exegetically precise, and pastorally relevant). The project implementation will take place in August 2019 so it is a ways out at this point.

Thank you for your time. Please let me know if you have any questions. I have attached my complete proposal if you are interested.

Tucker Anderson

Hey Jon,

I am currently enrolled as a DMin student at Southern Seminary and for my final dissertation project, I have to design and implement a project that will be a benefit to Calvary somehow. I would like to focus my project on helping small groups become more informed readers of the Gospels— specifically how the Gospels’ use of the Old Testament can provide a theological foundation for discipleship.

The purpose of the project is stated as follows:

The purpose of this project is to train Calvary Church small group members to understand how the four Gospels use the Old Testament to establish a biblical theological foundation for whole- life discipleship.

I will argue this proposition in the following ways:

1. The Gospel writers interpret the person and ministry of Jesus through an Old Testament hermeneutical lens
2. The intertextual nature of the Gospels forms the biblical metanarrative foundation for discipleship and a Christological approach to spiritual formation.

For this project I will be developing a three-week small group leader training and a five-week small group curriculum on how the Gospel of Matthew uses the Old Testament and its relevance for discipleship. I am wondering if you would be interested and open to serving on an advisory committee (which will also consist of a Bethel Seminary professor and pastoral staff member) to provide feedback on these curriculums (ensuring they are theologically sound, exegetically precise, and pastorally relevant). The project implementation will take place in August 2019 so it is a ways out at this point. I would love to have you on my team Jon. One of the things I want to ensure is that this curriculum will be immensely practical for those who use it.

Thank you for your time. Please let me know if you have any questions. I have attached my complete proposal if you are interested.

Tucker Anderson

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ABSTRACT

TRAINING SMALL GROUPS OF CALVARY CHURCH IN ROSEVILLE AND WHITE BEAR TOWNSHIP, MINNESOTA TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE GOSPELS USE THE OLD TESTAMENT

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
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This project seeks to train Calvary Church small group members to understand how the four Gospels use the Old Testament to establish a biblical theological foundation for whole-life discipleship. Chapter 1 outlines the history and structure of discipleship at Calvary Church. Chapter 2 provides the biblical and theological rationale for an intertextual reading of the Gospels by exegeting selected passages from Luke 24 and the book of Acts. Chapter 3 integrates intertextuality, biblical theology, and worldview formation for the purpose of discipleship. Chapter 4 provides a detailed outline of the project. Chapter 5 evaluates the project by weighing the outcomes against the stated goals. Through this project, the hope is that Calvary Church would see readers engaged in the four Gospels for the purpose of whole-life discipleship.

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