

Typology, Christology and Prosopological Exegesis: Implicit Narratives in Christological Texts

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INTRODUCTION

When reading the Old Testament (OT), several early church Fathers believed that they could detect the voice of the Father, the Son, or other characters in the divine economy.¹ One of the earliest descriptions of this phenomenon comes from Justin Martyr:

But when you hear the utterances of the prophets spoken as it were personally, you must not suppose that they are spoken by the inspired [i.e. “inspired ones”] themselves, but by the Divine Word who moves them. For sometimes He declares things that are to come to pass, in the manner of one who foretells the future; sometimes He speaks as from the person of God the Lord and Father of all; sometimes as from the person of Christ; sometimes as from the person of the people answering the Lord or His Father, just as you can see even in your own writers, one man being the writer of the whole, but introducing the persons who converse (*1 Apol* 36:1-2).²

Here, Justin Martyr explains to his readers that, in addition to predicting the future, the Divine Word can speak as other characters (e.g., the Father, Son, the church, etc.) through the prophet. This practice has recently been termed *prosopological exegesis* (PE)³ and a growing number of scholars suggest that this practice extends back to the New Testament (NT) itself.⁴ It is argued, for example, that when Peter quotes Psalm 16 in his Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:25-28), he understood the phrase, “For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor will you give your holy one to see corruption,”⁵ as not merely a prophecy about Christ’s resurrection (Acts 2:30-31), but Christ *himself* speaking through David about his own future resurrection.⁶ Some have disagreed with this assessment, however, and doubt that NT authors used prosopological exegesis.⁷

This paper aims to further this discussion by offering two categories by which potential prosopological texts can be distinguished and by evaluating prosopological explanations over against typological explanations on select NT texts.⁸ To summarize, biblical prophets, at times, take on or address ambiguous characters in prophetic discourse which require further identification. However, some examples of prosopological exegesis (particularly in the patristic period) identify additional speakers or addressees where there is little apparent warrant for doing so. The former (PE1) is a product of plain reading or *sensus literalis*, whereas the latter (PE2) seems to evidence a special exegetical strategy. I argue that they should be distinguished when evaluating whether PE occurs in the NT. As test cases for PE2 in the NT, I will focus on the use of Psalm 16 in Acts 2 and Acts 13, followed by select texts in Hebrews. Lastly, as prosopological exegesis has been employed as a tool for Christology, I will close with reflections on the value of PE for Christology and discerning inner-trinitarian dialogue and offer an alternative model for accounting for the resonance readers find between OT dialogues and later NT figures. As many readers may be unfamiliar with prosopological exegesis, however, I will briefly summarize the practice and the current issues surrounding it.

PROSOPOLOGICAL EXEGESIS AND THE USE OF THE OT IN THE NT

Prosopological exegesis (from *πρόσωπον*; “face,” “person”) is a technique by which a reader assigns a previously-unidentified character to a dialogue to

exposit the meaning of a text.⁹ As articulated by Matthew Bates (a prominent voice for PE in the NT), early Christians believed that the prophets of the OT could at times, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, assume the role of a character (*prosōpon*)—God the Father, Christ the Son, or the Holy Spirit—from another point in the divine economy.¹⁰ Unidentified shifts of person in prophetic dialogue were primary locations for seeing PE. For Justin Martyr, quoted above, the words of the Suffering Servant, “I set my back for whippings and my cheeks for beatings” (Isa 50:6), were the words of the future Christ reflecting on his road to the cross, with Isaiah speaking in his person (1 *Apol* 38.2). These words do not apply to the prophet, therefore, but to the future Christ who speaks through him.¹¹ In Bates’s terminology, the implicit narrative for this exegesis is *theodramatic*.¹² “If not the ancient prophet, then a theodramatic character.”¹³

Bates and others are convinced that parallels between NT and patristic exegesis are evidence that NT authors practiced some form of prosopological exegesis to explain the OT in light of the NT kerygma.¹⁴ As such, they are valuable data for understanding NT exegesis (along with, e.g., Second Temple Judaism) and how the early Christians conceived of personhood and dialogue in the Trinity.¹⁵

Debates over PE in the NT

A critical issue for determining the value of PE for NT interpretation is its background(s). The backgrounds for PE are speculative, but Bates and others find examples that date to NT times.¹⁶ Ancient rhetoricians, for example, taught that a speaker could at times take on a character for rhetorical effect (*prosopopoeia*; cf. Theon’s *progymnasmata*; first century AD).¹⁷ Bates also suggests a background in ancient Greco-Roman theatre where a limited number of actors adopted masks (*prosōpa*) to portray several characters and at times had to discern the speakers of unidentified dialogue changes in the script.¹⁸ In addition to Justin Martyr (first century AD) and the Fathers (e.g., Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine), Bates has also argued for PE in Philo (second century BC).¹⁹ Therefore, it seems that some practiced PE while the NT was being written.

However, several issues have caused doubt over the validity of applying the technique to the NT. The first is that while the Fathers often mark their PE with an introductory formula (e.g., ἀπο / ἐκ προσώπου),²⁰ none of the purported instances in the NT are marked.²¹ Peter Gentry has recently voiced additional

concern over the temporal and cultural distance of the background sources for PE from the context of the NT writers. Gentry contends that much of the evidence for PE postdates the NT and, while Greco-Roman rhetoric and drama may help explain the practices of some of the Fathers trained in Greek rhetoric and philosophy (e.g., Augustine and Justin Martyr),²² it is unclear what influence they would have had on the interpretation of Scripture by Palestinian Jews.²³ The debate over the influence of Second Temple interpretation on the NT—evidence which shares greater temporal and cultural overlap with that of the NT—only underscores the issue.²⁴ Thirdly, PE is often depicted as a non-contextual form of exegesis (i.e., one that does not respect the meaning of the OT passage),²⁵ which concerns some who hold that NT authors tended to respect the literal sense (though sometimes extended through typology or later inner-biblical interpretation). These issues have caused some to be skeptical of the claim that PE occurs in the NT.

Despite the amount of discussion on these matters, however, it seems that even Bates qualifies their value for confirming PE in the NT. For example, he says of Jesus's use of Psalm 110:

Jesus need not to have mastered Greco-Roman rhetorical theory or even to have been consciously aware of what we have termed prosopological exegesis as a distinctive reading strategy. Jesus need only to have believed that David, under the inspiring influence of the Holy Spirit (cf. Mark 12:36), was capable of taking on a different persona when speaking as a prophet.²⁶

The important point for Bates is that the authors of Scripture believed that the OT prophets could take on a role other than themselves under the Spirit's inspiration. This paper will not attempt to settle the issues related to PE's background, therefore, but will focus on whether PE best explains the scriptural data. Before proceeding to the texts, however, I will distinguish what I believe are two related, but distinct, phenomena that have together been labelled PE.

Textual Warrant: Two Categories

Matthew Bates has defined prosopological exegesis in this way:

Prosopological exegesis is a reading technique whereby an interpreter seeks to overcome a real or perceived ambiguity regarding the identity of the speakers or

addressees (or both) in the divinely inspired source text by assigning nontrivial prosopa (i.e., nontrivial vis-à-vis the “plain sense” of the text) to the speakers or addressees (or both) in order to make sense of the text.²⁷

However, as defined here, Bates has equated what I would consider two closely-related, yet separate processes: the identification of ambiguous figures whom Scripture signals someone will fulfill (PE1) and a reading strategy that identifies speakers not indicated by the text. In both cases, the reader seeks to overcome perceived ambiguities in the text to interpret it. However, the location for warrant in these two processes is different and should be distinguished. A couple of examples should illustrate the point.

PE1 – “Normal” PE.

Many OT prophecies include an ambiguous figure who will fulfill a given role. Some of these figures either receive or give speeches in a prophetic address. A clear example would be Psalm 110:1, “The declaration of YHWH to my lord.” David marks that YHWH speaks to David’s “lord,” who will receive global dominion and an enduring priestly office, but the exact identity of his lord is not given. In this case, grammar and syntax clearly mark the character within the text and the character has a defined role he is expected to fulfill. The Servant Songs of Isaiah are another example.²⁸ At times YHWH (or perhaps Isaiah himself) addresses an enigmatic servant figure who, while sometimes addressed as Israel, performs functions seemingly beyond what the nation could itself perform (e.g., 42:1-7; 49:5).²⁹ At other points, Isaiah appears to adopt the voice of the servant in the first person (e.g., Isa 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 61:1-2).³⁰ The identification of these figures will affect one’s interpretation. These texts also share at least two common attributes: 1) they mark the presence of an additional enigmatic character and 2) they outline a profile against which a potential solution can be tested. In this instance, the reader merely expects greater clarity regarding the character who fills the role marked by the prophecy as YHWH’s plan unfolds (e.g., Who is David’s “lord”? Does the prophet speak about himself or someone else? Cf. Acts 8:34).³¹ Therefore, when Jesus identifies the Messiah, the Davidic son, as David’s greater “lord” (Mark 12:36), he does not exercise a unique reading strategy, but offers a fulfillment of the expected figure. Bates affirms the notion that some texts

require the reader to look for the fulfillment of a figure and places most instances of PE in this category.³²

PE2 – “Special” PE.

In other texts, the warrant for identifying additional figures is unclear. The speakers and hearers do not seem ambiguous but are readily explained by the existing historical characters in the text. Many prophetic oracles, for instance, explicitly mark YHWH as the speaker (“A declaration of YHWH,” נאם יהוה) and in most cases YHWH may be assumed as the speaker throughout the oracle.³³ Similarly, many psalms have superscriptions to identify the author(s). For example, Psalm 16 (Ps 15 LXX), begins with a superscription to David and maintains a consistent first-person speech with YHWH as the hearer.³⁴ In these instances, the text does not seem to signal or require an additional speaker or addressee, thus the warrant for positing one is less clear on a plain (*sensus literalis*) reading. One can readily find examples of this kind of PE in patristic interpretation. As noted by Bates, Justin Martyr is typical of Fathers who interpreted the entirety of Psalm 22 as referring to Christ, sometimes explaining the first-person speech as Christ’s own (*Dial.* 98-99).³⁵ In Augustine’s exposition of Psalm 3, for example, he notes briefly that the psalm belongs to David but that it seems to pertain much better to Christ (*Expos. Psalms* 3.1).³⁶ He then proceeds to interpret the entire psalm as a dialogue between Christ and the Father, disregarding David completely. While it is debatable whether the Fathers would have called their interpretations a “reading strategy” (perhaps rather a “spiritual sensitivity”),³⁷ the type of identification described in PE1 is adopted as a principle for finding Christ in the OT.

While Bates does not affirm every instance of PE in the Fathers and argues for controls on the practice, Bates’s considers both phenomena PE without formal distinction.³⁸ For some, this is not an issue, but those who hold that the NT authors tended to respect the intentions of the OT text (like myself) will object to labelling these two processes as the same thing.³⁹ For PE1, where the reader finds unspecified dialogue around an ambiguous future figure, no peculiar reading strategy or exegetical technique seems required. A plain reading creates the expectation of the fulfillment of a prophetically-defined role (though there may be disagreement over who best fulfills it). In the second category, these features, and the attending warrant, are lacking.⁴⁰ The presence of this latter phenomenon in Scripture, in my view,

is debatable. As the above examples show, the primary principle, “If not the ancient prophet, then a theodramatic character,”⁴¹ seems to place great weight on the subjective impressions of the interpreter rather than the cues of the text itself (as with Augustine’s exegesis of Psalm 3).⁴² The concern is that these prosopological readings eclipse the historical cues laden in the text because the words are felt to resonate so strongly with another figure. This seems to run at odds with the biblical authors’ concern for historical progression (e.g., Acts 7; Rom 4, 7; Gal 3).⁴³ At least for the purposes of this paper, these categories will allow for greater precision when evaluating potential instances of PE.

SOME SAMPLE TEXTS FOR EVALUATION

The following will focus on a selection of passages where PE2 seems present in the NT. The first two are speeches in Acts which make use of the Psalms to refer to the Messiah (Acts 2:14-36 and Acts 13:16-47), followed by selections from Hebrews. While many interpretations of these texts have been offered, the following will focus on PE vis-à-vis typology, as the two approaches operate with similar hermeneutical presuppositions.⁴⁴

Acts 2

The use of Psalm 16 in Acts 2 and Acts 13 are important examples for Bates of PE in the NT against common typological explanations.⁴⁵ These cases are particularly useful for evaluating PE, as Psalm 16 is spoken in the first person throughout, the text is applied to Christ in both speeches, and the interpretive rationale of the author is more explicit. As Bates draws christological significance from these readings, I will first evaluate the plausibility of PE, then the christological conclusions.

As noted in the introduction, Bates argues that Peter’s use of Psalm 16:8-11 (Ps 15:8-11 LXX) in Acts 2:22-36 is best understood prosopologically. That is, Peter believes that the Holy Spirit spoke through David the words of the future Christ.⁴⁶ To support this reading, he first emphasizes the contrast Peter makes between David and Christ. Peter highlights that the fulfillment of God’s promise to deliver from death was found not in David, who did die, but in his royal offspring (Acts 2:29). David died, which made him an unfitting character for the words. This logic, argues Bates, tends away

from a typological reading, which supposes that both the type and antitype participate in the same image. Rather, the way that Peter links the first- and second-person speech in the psalm to Christ (2:31) demands that he construed the speaker of the psalm to be Christ, *not* David. Secondly, Bates contends David's perceived prophetic status emphasizes the future rather than the present circumstance of David. Peter therefore understands these verses of Psalm 16 to apply to Christ and not David, who prophetically adopted the character of Christ speaking of his future resurrection. The implicit narrative for interpretation is theodramatic.

Bates's argument rests on implication, for Peter nowhere attributes these words to Christ as the speaker, only that their content rightly applies to him. David as a prophet saw ahead and spoke concerning (περί, 2:31) Christ's resurrection. Nonetheless, his reading is possible. However, I believe that when the context is considered, a covenantally-informed typological explanation is more plausible.

Firstly, a contrast between David and the Messiah does not bar a typological⁴⁷ relationship. Types may indicate contrast as well as continuity (cf. Adam and Christ in Romans 5:12-21).⁴⁸ Moreover, Luke has signaled that both anointed kings operate under the same Davidic promise for an enduring throne (cf. Luke 1:32-33; cf. 2 Sam 7). Peter's contrast does not override these connections, rather, it assumes them.

Peter's use of Psalm 69:25 (Ps 68:26 LXX) and Psalm 109:8 (Ps 108:8 LXX) to refer to Judas in Acts 1:15-26 will help to illustrate that typological reasoning is likely in view in Acts 2.⁴⁹ On its face, Peter's speech in Acts 1:15-26 looks like another direct prophecy solved by PE. Peter here tells the brothers that Psalm 69:25 and 109:8 concerned Judas (περὶ Ἰούδα; 1:16). This scripture was "spoken beforehand" (προλέγω) by the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David, so as with Acts 2, David's prophetic role is in view. If interpreted prosopologically, the conclusion would be that David took on the character of Christ, who spoke to the Father concerning Judas, who persecuted him.⁵⁰ However, a PE reading is rendered problematic in that Peter changes the persons of the text. The referent of Psalm 69:25 (Ps 68:26 LXX) is *plural* in both the Greek and Hebrew (indicating a group), but Peter here has changed it to a *singular*.⁵¹ This change, along with the others,⁵² makes the idea that Peter saw this passage as the in-character speech of Jesus less likely.

However, a typological explanation works well here. That is, Peter likely saw Judas as a poignant instance in a pattern of opposition to YHWH's anointed one. This reading is strengthened by the use of Psalm 69 in the Gospels, which all evoke Psalm 69, either explicitly or by allusion, as they narrate Jesus's passion and crucifixion (Matt 27:48; Luke 23:36; Mark 15:36; John 19:29). Paul cites Psalm 69 in Romans 11:10 to imprecate those who oppose the spread of the gospel. In each case, the situation regards those who oppose the Davidic king and his covenant. Peter's speech in Acts 1 fits well with this reasoning: *the disciples see Judas as a supreme instance in a pattern of opposition to the anointed Davidic king*. Psalm 109:8 (Ps 108:8 LXX) can be explained the same way. What happened to Judas was *necessary* by way of the pattern of doom that had been outlined for those who maltreat YHWH's anointed.

Peter's use of Psalm 16 in Acts 2 likely follows the same line of thought. Given that Peter spoke to Jews, it was obvious to them that David was dead. The connection for Peter lies in the *certainty of the promise to the Davidic king*. David believed that he would live to attain the throne God had promised to him, or possibly referred to his future resurrection.⁵³ Either way, David believed the promises of God for his anointed and spoke prophetically about one who would ultimately fulfill those promises (cf. Psalm 110).

The Anointed Davidic King (Jesus) fulfilled the entire trajectory set and anticipated by the anointed David. In addition to possessing the promise of an enduring throne, David is the standard by which the prophets measure kings (1 Kgs 11:4; 15:3; 2 Kgs 14:3; 16:2; 18:3; 22:2). In the latter prophets, David stands for his line. Ezekiel, for example, says of Israel's future restoration: "they shall be my people, and I will be their God. My servant David shall be king over them" (Ezek 37:23c-24; cf. Hos 3:5).⁵⁴ By using "my servant David" as a synecdoche for his line, the prophet projects David's faithfulness onto the eschatological king. This line of thinking is reflected in the Psalter, where David's hymns are retained and take on additional significance in light of the Davidic promise and David's empty throne.⁵⁵ Furthermore, when the Gospel writers reflected on Jesus' passion and death, they noticed events that bore striking resemblances to David's own experience in the Psalms.⁵⁶ So when Peter uses Psalm 16 to refer to Jesus, he follows a long line of interpretation that connects anointed David with the Anointed Davidic King. Therefore, the Anointed One's resurrection was in effect prophesied

by David as he clung to his own promise and anointing. David knew that the faithful Davidic King would not see destruction; this was fulfilled to the utmost in the perfectly faithful Jesus.

The words of Psalm 16, then, are best understood by Peter to apply first and truly to David, but most fully to Jesus as Messiah. As for David, these words expressed that YHWH was at his side, ready to help him and fulfill the promise that he would be king.⁵⁷ As a prophet, however, considering YHWH's promises to him as the anointed king (1 Sam 16:1-13; 2 Sam 7, cf. Psalm 110), the trajectory of his thought extended beyond himself to his future Heir.

If the undergirding logic for the use of Psalm 16 in Acts 2 is best understood as covenantal and typological, the application of these words in the first-person to Jesus is better explained as a *rhetorical strategy* than a reading technique. Bates has noted the use of *prosopopoeia* in speeches, where a speaker takes on a character for rhetorical effect.⁵⁸ Peter applies this effect to the preaching of Christ to rhetorically strengthen the connection between David and his heir through the inspired words of Scripture.⁵⁹ Psalm 16 acts as a rhetorical shorthand for these trajectories, which can be a feature of preaching (especially summarized speeches like those in Acts).⁶⁰ Given the general sensitivity of the biblical authors (and assumedly their largely Jewish audience) to the history of Israel, it seems unlikely that they would argue that the words of Psalm 16 did not apply to David. One might gloss Peter's speech, then, in this way: when David said that YHWH would not let his holy one see corruption, he "in effect" spoke about the resurrection of Christ, to whom these words are even more fitting than they were for David.⁶¹

Immediately following, Peter identifies Jesus as David's "lord" in Psalm 110:1 (Ps 109:1 LXX; Acts 2:33-35). This is an example of PE1. Peter creates rhetorical contrast to show the supremacy of Jesus as Messiah, who fulfilled what David prophesied (namely, the Davidic covenant) in Psalm 110 by his ascension. For both texts, the implicit narrative is *covenantal*, resting on biblically defined trajectories which find their fulfillment in the Messiah.

Acts 13

Bates's explanation of Psalm 16:10 (Ps 15:10 LXX) in Acts 13:35 is slightly different.⁶² Bates again stresses that the contrast offered by Paul, which mirrors that of Peter (13:36-37) undermines a typological explanation.

However, with respect to Psalm 16, Bates claims only that Paul saw Jesus, the Davidic heir, as the referent (not the speaker) of the psalm. This follows from his interpretation of Isaiah 55:3, where he argues the referent is also Jesus. In these quotations, God himself is fronted as the speaker, but this is consistent with the NT view of all Scripture as God-breathed (2 Tim 3:16). Using the categories described above, Paul's use of Isaiah 55:3 is an instance of PE1. The Davidic heir has merely been identified as Jesus (who has been confirmed as such by his resurrection).⁶³ The connection between Psalm 16 and the Christ, would, I contend, follow the same covenantal-typological reasoning given above.

Support for this understanding is found on either side of this section of Paul's speech. Notably, at the end of Paul's speech (13:47), he says that God has commanded (*ἐντέλλω*) Paul and his coworkers the text of Isaiah 49:6. Is there a case of double PE, here, where the Spirit supplies both the script of the Messiah and the apostles?⁶⁴ Or does Paul see his work as an extension of Christ's own work (even participation in Christ himself; cf. Gal 2:20), who fulfilled the expected role of the Servant (PE1)? The latter option is simpler. This reading becomes even stronger when Paul's rebuke to Elymas in the preceding narrative (13:10) is considered. Here Paul charges Elymas with making crooked "the straight paths of the Lord," alluding to Isaiah 40:3, dialogue which is everywhere in the Gospels applied to John the Baptist (Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23). Again, if Bates's model is to be applied consistently, this would seem to entail that Luke saw two voices speaking in the theodrama, which is problematic for Bates, given his resistance to oscillation between multiple characters in the same voice (e.g., between Christ and the church).⁶⁵ A covenantal-typological logic better explains how the same text can apply to both John and Paul. Paul sees his commission to the Gentiles as an extension of John's work, preparing the way of the Messiah through his preaching. If these interpretations are granted, then the likelihood that a similar logic underpins Paul's use of Psalm 16 is reasonable.

Acts Summary

Both typological and PE explanations depend on inference. However, when the context of these passages is considered, a covenantal-typological narrative has greater explanatory power. Trying to apply the theodramatic narrative consistently in surrounding passages that would seem to qualify for PE turns

out to be problematic. However, an implicit covenantal narrative provides a coherent explanation and displays how the use of these texts can be drawn back to their original meaning.⁶⁶ Given that the apostles were heavily interested in what they understood as the correct interpretation of the OT (e.g., Acts 17:2; 18:24-28; 1 Tim 1:6-10; 2 Tim 2:15), this explanation seems better in line with their apologetic aims and should be preferred. I will now demonstrate how this same logic may apply in the use of Psalms in Hebrews.

Hebrews

Hebrews begins with the plain assertion that God speaks (Heb 1:1). While he has spoken in many ways and times in the prophets, he has now spoken ἐν υἱῷ. Space allows for only brief comment here, but the use of the Psalms in the opening catena and in Hebrews 10:5-7 have also been offered as examples of PE2.⁶⁷

The author of Hebrews begins his sermon with the affirmation that the Son who has been “appointed” (ἔθηκεν) as the “heir of all things.”⁶⁸ Whether this appointment was at the resurrection or in eternity past is debated, however, the opening verses of the catena support that the appointment be seen as the installment of the Davidic king.⁶⁹ This reading may be confirmed by the opening two quotations. Psalm 2:7 is followed immediately by 2 Samuel 7:14, which suggests that they are mutually interpretive; namely, Psalm 2:7 is understood in view of the Davidic promise.⁷⁰ While Psalm 2:7 has been seen by some as PE2, it is more difficult to account for the idea that Nathan took on character in his speech to David in 2 Samuel 7.⁷¹ Peter Gentry has argued at length that the use of Psalms 2, 45 and 110 by NT authors were guided by the metanarrative of the OT and typology. All three feature in the opening catena of chapter one. Psalms 2 and 110, Gentry has argued, both reflect on the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7, to which Psalm 110 adds reflections from Genesis 14.⁷² Trajectories in Isaiah blur the lines between YHWH and the Davidic king he promised to act through, which explains the language of Psalm 45.⁷³ In Gentry’s view, the NT authors are sensitive to these Scriptural trajectories (as in Acts 2), wherein the literal sense of the original text is maintained.⁷⁴ In this case, the citations from Psalms 2 and 110 would be examples of PE1.⁷⁵ What I have argued above strengthens Gentry’s case by trying to account for the language these texts use as hermeneutical shorthand, a rhetorical technique which can be expected in a homily where

the speaker and audience share some base of knowledge.⁷⁶ In these verses, the author of Hebrews establishes the eternal Son as the Davidic Son to whom all dominion is given.

Aubrey Sequeira has conducted a thorough study of the use of Psalm 40:6-8 in Hebrews 10:5-7.⁷⁷ He concludes, in light of the contextual cues both in Psalm 40 and in Hebrews, that a biblical-theological logic allows the author to develop the meaning in light of redemptive-historical developments which culminate in eschatological fulfillment in Christ.⁷⁸ Sequeira accepts the use of “prosopological exegesis” but also departs from Bates’s logic in significant ways. Sequeira asserts that the words did truly apply to David as subject and speaker, whereas Bates’s theodramatic model would hold David as the speaker but not the subject.⁷⁹ Sequeira also sees PE as compatible with typology, whereas Bates does not, and disagrees with Bates on the function of PE.⁸⁰ Put simply, while Sequeira uses the term, it is questionable whether his interpretation should be called PE, if it is to maintain any substantive connection Bates’s model. I contend that his explanation better matches with the model I have outlined above.⁸¹

Christological Implications

In Bates’s prosopological reading of Acts 2, he concludes that it is the *Father* who is at the right hand of elevated Son who sits on the royal throne.⁸² This conclusion raises questions. In the NT, the Son is consistently depicted at the Father’s right hand, not the other way around (cf. esp. Acts 2:33-34). Also, nowhere does the NT indicate that the Father would occupy a less-elevated position than the Son. Indeed, its authors take care to indicate the reverse (cf. 1 Cor 15:27-28). Secondly, while Bates contends that the Son later adopts a position at the Father’s right hand as the “exalted son,” installed as heavenly Lord (2:34), it is unclear how moving from the throne itself to the right side constitutes exaltation. Bates’s theodramatic interpretation is therefore unconvincing.

If the exalted Son as Messiah (i.e., his human nature) is read as the focus throughout Peter’s speech, the reading is more cohesive. Peter’s main point is that God had planned that Jesus of Nazareth would die and be raised as both Lord and Messiah (2:22-24; 32). Psalm 16 and Psalm 110 both support the resurrection (γάρ, 2:25, 34) in that it was not possible for Jesus to be held by death (2:24) and that the Messiah would ascend on high as David

foretold (2:34). A covenantal-typological explanation that is sensitive to the rhetorical strategies of Acts has greater explanatory power exegetically and christologically.

In Acts 13, Bates argues that Psalm 2:7 supports only the claim that God has fulfilled the promise to their fathers (i.e., the Davidic promise) and not the resurrection.⁸³ In doing so, Bates guards against interpretations that advance christological adoptionism.⁸⁴ That Christ was exalted as Son of God in power (Rom 1:3-4) does not necessitate adoptionism. Rather, it recognizes the role that God the Eternal Son now fulfills as the incarnate Davidic Son.⁸⁵ The brief catena in Acts 13:33-35 supports Paul's point that God has fulfilled the promise to the fathers by raising Jesus from the dead, confirming him as Messiah. This does not undermine the Son's divinity but does inform one's understanding of Christ's person and work.⁸⁶

Bates also concludes that the earliest Christians understood this Psalm 2:7 to reflect a preincarnational begetting.⁸⁷ While this may be so of later church Fathers, it is not as clear that such was meant by the author of Hebrews. The Son's divinity is clearly affirmed (Heb 1:1-4). However, especially in light of 2 Samuel 7:14, Psalm 2:7 likely depicts the eternal Son's appointment as the divine-human Messiah. Psalm 110 is a case of PE1, merely identifying the expected figure. Psalm 40 follows the line of interpretation of Psalm 16 in Acts 2. The preacher uses these words in a rhetorically clever and fresh way to describe the work of the Son in coming to earth, but the underpinning logic is covenantal and typological, culminating in the Son's eschatological fulfillment.

SUMMARY: MOVING FORWARD WITH PE IN THE NT

I have argued for a distinction regarding texts under debate for PE based on the textual warrant for doing so. Where enigmatic figures are advanced by a prophetic text the reader naturally looks for a satisfying identity. The same is true in prophetic texts with unmarked shifts in person (e.g., Isa 55:3-5). This process, I contend, is normal reading, following grammatical and literary signals in the text itself. I have termed this PE1 for the purposes of this paper, but there may be readers who engage in this practice who would not agree with the applications in PE2. It is debatable, therefore, due to the association with PE2, that this practice should be called PE.

When a character assignment goes beyond the list of characters provided by a text or inserts a character when there is no discernible shift in person, the warrant for PE is less clear. I have termed this PE2. I have argued that this type of reading requires greater justification due to concerns of authorial intent and the historical axis of Scripture. In the test cases above, I demonstrated that it is difficult to apply PE consistently in the contexts of the texts offered by Bates and that a covenantal-typological logic has greater explanatory power, especially when the same dialogue is used for multiple persons (e.g., Paul and Isaiah 49:6). That is, these texts are better explained by covenantal-typological, rather than theodramatic, narratives.

These cases do not prove that PE does not happen in the NT but, in my view, they justify that greater care should be taken before applying PE (especially PE2) to the NT authors. This is supported, first, by the fact mentioned above that every purported instance of PE in the NT is unmarked. Of course, the NT authors may have practiced PE like the Fathers without marking it, but the absence of this marker should at least urge caution when making PE assignments, especially when models that have further biblical support are available. This leads to the second point, namely, that typology is broadly recognized as a feature of divine revelation and OT interpretation,⁸⁸ whereas there is little evidence, if any, for PE in the OT.⁸⁹ Given the privileged status of the OT as the means of preaching Christ, it would seem to follow that an event that was preached as a continuation of that history would make use not only of its texts, but also its methods. While this does not prohibit something like PE, if a solution can be found in categories native to already existing Scripture, it should be preferred.

REFLECTIONS ON THE VALUE OF PE FOR CHRISTOLOGY

Seeing how the architects of the doctrine of the Trinity, like Tertullian, argued for distinction within the Trinity based on inner-Trinitarian dialogues they saw in texts like the Psalms (cf. *Against Praxeus* 11), Bates contends that prosopological exegesis was “irreducibly essential” to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity.⁹⁰ PE allowed the early church “to read the one God as multiple persons in the ancient Scripture—Father, Son, and inspiring Spirit.”⁹¹ That is, this kind of exegesis privileged the “person” concept when considering distinctions within the one God, which was further articulated

in the Trinitarian language (*οὐσία* and *ὑπόστασις*) later centuries (e.g., Nicaea).⁹² Therefore, he concludes, “if this method cannot find adequate hermeneutical footing, Trinitarian dogma . . . might be undermined.”⁹³ That PE is indispensable to the development Trinity, however, is questionable for the following reasons.

First, for PE to happen, defined characters—or persons—must already exist. As Bates contends: “For a good reading, a correspondence must exist between the description of the speaker or addressee in the ancient text and what is known about the proposed theodramatic character as that character is revealed elsewhere in the divine economy.”⁹⁴ PE therefore seems to require that a “person” already be recognized and individually defined. It is difficult, therefore, to see how PE is “irreducibly essential” to developing a concept it presupposes. YHWH is depicted in personal terms throughout the OT (speaking, hearing, commanding, promising) as is Jesus in the NT who speaks of himself in relation to both the Father and the Spirit (e.g., John 15:23-26).⁹⁵ If PE (particularly PE2) exists in the NT, then it only serves to illustrate already existing conceptions. Furthermore, Richard Bauckham has noted that for Greek (particularly Platonic) thinkers, personhood within God was not as readily defined.⁹⁶ In the PE of the early Fathers, we may see them bringing their doctrine of God into conformity with the Scriptures against their previously held concepts. If this is the case, then to claim PE as central to the doctrine of the Trinity appears to be an overstatement, as the content for personhood was already present, but was being translated into a new idiom.⁹⁷ If it should prove unwarranted, (or nonexistent in the NT for that matter), Trinitarian dogma will remain on firm foundations.

Secondly, however, while the recognition of Jesus as the Servant of Isaiah raises interesting questions regarding inner-trinitarian speech, PE as advanced by Bates (and practiced in the Fathers) seems vulnerable to losing valuable Christological connections by flattening the historical progression of Scripture. If, for example, David is understood to speak Psalm 22 in the character of Christ and not himself (taking here the example of the Fathers, not the NT), then the connection between David and Christ is limited; David merely adopts the character. But if David recognized that he, as the anointed king, was an instance in a pattern of God’s deliverance of righteous sufferers (cf. Ps 22:4-5, 30-31), Jesus’ quotation of Psalm 22:1 on the cross shows that he climatically fulfills these patterns (Matt 27:46 and Mark 43:51).⁹⁸ That is,

one better understands how the OT was “fulfilled” in Jesus. Prosopological exegesis, as advanced by Bates and practiced by some of the Fathers, runs the risk of subsuming these data points into a divine conversation, flattening the developments that inform Christ’s person and work.⁹⁹

Why the Resonance?

When the Fathers engage in prosopological exegesis, it is often easy to see the resonance between a given text and the prosopon assigned. As noted above, for example, Augustine interprets Psalm 3 first in the person of Christ, then the church, then the believer fighting his sin.¹⁰⁰ In some sense, David’s words do seem strikingly appropriate for all three. Considering the discussion above, how might one account for this resonance?

The author of Hebrews discusses how major institutions, events, and people in the OT were *shadows* of what was to come (Heb 10:1). Given that all the promises and covenants of God find their fulfillment in Jesus, NT authors also saw that many of these patterns were continued in the Church (e.g., the temple in the OT, Christ as the temple [John 2:19-22], and then the church as God’s temple and Christ’s body [1 Cor 3:16-17]). To close, I will use Augustine’s exegesis of Psalm 3 as an outline to illustrate the principles explored in this essay.

With respect to Christ, one follows the biblical authors who saw that David’s significance extended far beyond himself because of the promise God made to him (2 Sam 7). When David died and Israel reflected on the implications of the promise, especially in exile, David’s person was held as a paradigm for the Davidic heir. Jesus is the Davidic heir, and reflects David, but perfects what David lacked.¹⁰¹ For example, in Acts 13, Paul links together David and Jesus in the sense that both were obedient to God’s will (Acts 13:22, 28).¹⁰² Therefore, what David experiences in the Psalms as the righteous, anointed king of God finds ready resonance with the life of Jesus.

As for the church, the NT authors stressed the intimate relationship between Christians and Christ. Just as they were “in Adam” in unbelief, believers are now “in Christ,” his very body, and a temple of the Spirit (Rom 5:12-2; 1 Cor 3:16-17; 12:27). There is a deep and mysterious union between the Messiah and his followers, such that the experiences of one involve the other (e.g., Matt 25; Acts 9:1-4; John 17:23). As members of the new covenant, the Spirit of Christ works in God’s people to the end of making them like

him (Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:2). Those who oppose the Messiah also oppose his people (Acts 9:4) and his followers take part in his sufferings (Phil 1:29). In as much as the people of God align themselves with the Davidic King Jesus, they enter his victories and struggles. Their hearts, by the Spirit, are aligned to the same trajectories as David's when he penned these psalms, but they are realized on an even grander scale. Thus, the church may rightly identify Psalm 3 in that they are confident that God will save and bless those who trust in him (cf. their prayer of Ps 2:1-2 in Acts 4:25-26).

The Christian's battle with sin is an extension of Christ's battle with sin. The opposition to the Davidic king was but one expression of rebellion against God's rule (Ps 2). Christ-followers, empowered by the Spirit of Christ, engage in the same resistance against passions which war against their souls, having died and been raised with Christ (1 Pet 2:11).

In my view, the Fathers often intuited biblically warranted connections, but the warrant is better explained in the trajectories established in Scripture itself. These are the ancient paths we should tread, and we honor the legacy of the Fathers by holding their methods accountable to the Scriptures they sought to explain and defend.

CONCLUSION

This article has aimed to advance the discussion over prosopological exegesis in the NT. I have offered category clarifications regarding the practice of prosopological exegesis and brought the theodramatic narratives of PE into deeper interaction with a covenantal-typological narrative. In the cases I have reviewed here, covenantally-informed typology seems to better account for the interpretations of the NT authors when the uses of the OT are compared with similar uses nearby. However, this evaluation is only a start. Much more work needs to be done on the relationship of typology to PE, how past prophetic speech of a character fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth relates to the Eternal Son (e.g., the Servant and Psalm 110:1), and the role of homiletical rhetoric in communication these points. I hope this article contributes toward a deeper knowledge of how the NT authors understood and preached these texts while heralding the good news of Jesus, the offspring of David and eternal Begotten of God.

1. For an overview of the history of prosopological exegesis, see chapter four in Matthew W. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012); Matthew W. Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 28–30. Also see the introduction in Madison N. Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations in Scripture* (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 178; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).
2. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (trans. Marcus Dods and George Reith, vol. 1; Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing, 1885).
3. Scholars have labelled this phenomenon differently. Carl Andresen called it “prosopographic exegesis” (Carl Andresen, “Zur Entstehung und Geschichte des trinitarischen Personbegriffes,” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 52, no. 1–2 [1961]: 1–39). Marie-Josèphe Rondeau used the term *exégèse prosopologique* (prosopological exegesis) which has become the preferred nomenclature for Matthew Bates and those who have followed him in arguing for the prosopological exegesis in the NT. See Marie-Josèphe Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier: IIIe-Ve siècles*, 2 vols., *Orientalia Christiana Analecta*; 219–220 (Roma: Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1982); Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 184–87; Bates, *Birth*, 28–30.
4. See Bates, *Hermeneutics*; Bates, *Birth*; Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations in Scripture*; Craig A. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 192f.; Susan E. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*. 2. Reihe, 0340-9570; 260 (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2009). Andresen believed that it was in Heb 1:5–13, 5:5f., and Acts 2:24–35 (Andresen, “Zur Entstehung und Geschichte des trinitarischen Personbegriffes,” 20–21).
5. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.
6. As explained by Matthew Bates: “David was not merely speaking about him, but rather this yet-to-be-revealed Jesus was making an in-character speech at the time of David *through David*” (Bates, *Birth*, 153. Italics original).
7. See, for example, Peter J. Gentry, “A Preliminary Evaluation and Critique of Prosopological Exegesis,” *SBJT* 23, no. 2 (2019): 105–22.
8. Matthew Bates, for example, has set his explanations for prosopological exegesis against typological explanations. See Bates, *Birth*, 9. Bates’s primary interaction with typology, however, is with Richard Hays, whose version of typology (following Francis Young) fails to account for discontinuity in types. Other models of typology do account for discontinuity, however, like the model applied in this paper (e.g., Rom 5:12–21 expresses both continuity and discontinuity in an explicitly typological relationship). For further discussion, see Aubrey M. Sequeira, “The Hermeneutics of Eschatological Fulfillment in Christ: Biblical-Theological Exegesis in the Epistle to the Hebrews” (PhD Dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), 96–100. but also develops and clarifies the original meaning in light of progressive biblical-theological development across the canon of Scripture and eschatological fulfillment in Christ. Furthermore, it is argued that an examination of citations and allusions to the OT illumines the biblical-theological framework and hermeneutical presuppositions guiding the author of Hebrews (his “interpretive perspective”).
9. Bates, *Birth*, 2, 13, 84. This technique is aptly described by Madison Pierce: “The ancient exegetical technique known as ‘prosopological exegesis’ interprets texts by assigning “faces” (πρόσωπα), or characters, to ambiguous or unspecified personal (or personified) entities represented in the text in question.” Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations in Scripture*, 4.
10. By “divine economy” Bates means, “God’s administrative providence over all reality, both textual and metatextual, and the effects thereby achieved” (Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 117n29). In my view, when discussing potential *prosōpa* in OT texts, the idea has large overlap with that of “salvation history.”
11. This is a fundamental feature of prosopological exegesis (Bates, *Birth*, 188, 196).
12. See Bates, *Birth*, 34–36. Bates describes three settings for PE. The first is the *prophetic setting*, which is the time and place of the prophet’s speech (e.g. Isaiah during the kingdom’s decline). The second horizon, the *theodramatic setting*, where the divine economy is abstracted (“the narrative world of the ‘divine play,’” 35), allowing the prophet to speak words from another character at a given point in salvation history, speaking from the point of view of that person at that time (e.g. Christ speaking to the Father from the cross). The third setting, the *actualized setting*, is when the event of the theodrama occurs (that is, Christ on the cross). More simply, PE is when a prophet speaks from the perspective of another person or event in salvation history.
13. Bates, *Birth*, 182, 188.

14. For Bates' argument for the kerygma, see chapter two in Bates, *Hermeneutics*.
15. See Bates, *Birth*, 1–2. He argues that as earlier texts help to illumine the intended meaning of a given text, so also do later texts. Bates calls this approach a *diachronic intertextuality*, where he seeks to “contextualize New Testament interpretations of the Old Testament by utilizing Second Temple Jewish resources and the early Fathers of the church.” See Bates, *Birth*, 58; Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 53–56. This method compares *pre-texts* (the earlier writing that a given *Text* interprets), *co-texts* (interpretations of the same pre-text from the same period), and *post-texts* (later interpretations of the pre-text via the given *Text*). I have capitalized “*Text*” for clarity. Examples of using PE for trinitarian insights, see Bates, *Birth*; Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations in Scripture*.
16. The most complete treatment is chapter four in Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 183–221. See also Bates, *Birth*, 31–34; Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations in Scripture*, 6–11.
17. Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 194–99.
18. Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 192–94; Bates, *Birth*, 31.
19. Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 211–12.
20. An example from Justin Martyr: “And that this too may be clear to you, *there were spoken from the person of the Father* through Isaiah the Prophet, the following words: The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel does not know, and My people has not understood. Woe, sinful nation, a people full of sins, a wicked seed, children that are transgressors, you have forsaken the Lord” (1 *Apol* 37 in Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, *ANFI*. Italics mine).
21. Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations in Scripture*, 21. The terminology ‘marked’ and ‘unmarked’ comes from Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 218.
22. For an analysis of Augustine's hermeneutical progression see Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). For Martyr's own account of his philosophical background, see *Dialogue with Trypho* §2. See also Gentry, “A Preliminary Evaluation,” 108.
23. See Gentry, “A Preliminary Evaluation,” 106–8, 119–20. Theon's handbook, the earliest available specimen of a *progymnasmata*, may be from the first century, but his location and Greco-Roman audience make it difficult to confirm whether his work would have already influenced the NT authors (see George A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, vol. 10, Writings from the Greco-Roman World [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003], 1; Donald Andrew Frank Moore Russell, *Theon* (3) (RE 5), *Aelius* [Oxford University Press, 2012], <https://www.oxfordreference.com>). Philo also wrote from Alexandria and is not considered representative of standard Jewish interpretation (cf. Henning Graf. Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation*, trans. Leo G. Perdue, vol. 1 [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009], 117. Much of the other material (e.g., later rhetorical handbooks of Hermogenes and Libanius, the Targums, Rabbinic material) postdates the NT.
24. Cf. Hays's caution for assuming that parallels entail influence, particularly from later sources, in Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 11. See also G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 3–4. Bates cites a possible example from 11QMelch, but again, while comparisons with Qumran literature are frequently offered, it is uncertain to what extent the Essenes reflect the thought of the biblical authors. Bates, *Birth*, 59–60; Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations in Scripture*, 10.
25. See Bates, *Birth*, 27; Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation*, 177; Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations in Scripture*, 21. In his discussion on the literal sense, Bates urges his readers to consider the horizon or context to which the literal sense may be fixed. He describes how modern historical-critical methods have focused on original intent but often evaluate the correct reading via hypothetical reconstructions of the past at the expense of the literary context (including the canon). By contrast, he contends that the most vital (though not only) context for interpretation should be the “richer metatextual horizon” conveyed by the Old and New Testament, which is rooted in God's comprehensive providence (Bates, *Birth*, 81–84). I agree that the canon—respecting its inner covenantal structures—provides the proper and primary context for interpretation (see Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993], 290–311). However, in Bates's description, the relationship is between the scriptural horizon and the progressive unfolding history of Scripture.
26. Bates, *Birth*, 66. See esp. n52.
27. Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 218.

28. The precise identity of the speaker in the servant passages has long been debated (particularly ch. 49-55) For a brief summary of positions, see Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2009), 152-57, Retrieved from ProQuest Ebook Central. See also Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed (Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 494-95.
29. For Bates's treatment of Isaiah passages, see Bates, *Birth*, 71-76, 79-80, 92-113, 125-26, 140-46.
30. See, for example, Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 394, Retrieved from ProQuest Ebook Central.
31. Another example would be Genesis 1:26, God speaks in the plural "Let *us* make man in *our* image." While the speaker is clearly God in this passage, to whom does he speak? While the plural has been variously interpreted throughout history, Irenaeus understood it to be the Father speaking to the Son, as did the writer of the Epistle of Barnabas. See Bates, *Birth*, 82. Irenaeus, *Epideixis*. 55, Epist. Barn 6:12. In this passage, supplying the identity of the addressee as the Son yields a particular interpretation and import for the author's argument.
32. See Bates, *Birth*, 196.
33. E.g., Gen. 22:16; Num. 14:28; 1 Sam. 2:30; 2 Ki. 9:26; 2 Chr. 34:27; Ps. 110:1; Isa. 14:22-23; Jer. 1:8; Ezek. 13:6-7; Hos. 2:15; Joel 2:12; Amos 2:11; Obad. 1:4, 8; Mic. 4:6; Nah. 2:14; Zeph. 1:2-3; Hag. 1:9; Zech. 1:3-4; Mal. 1:2
34. For a defense of the *lamed* of attribution (or *auctoris*) in Psalms, see Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 22-23.
35. For further references, see Bates, *Birth*, 131-32. However, Justin seems to talk about other verses as prophetic. Ps 22:1, which Christ *did* later say, he speaks of it as an announcement beforehand, rather than the words of the Christ through David (*Dial.* 99.1).
36. Augustine: "The words, 'I slept, and took rest; and rose, for the Lord will take me up,' lead us to believe that this Psalm is to be understood as in the Person of Christ; for they sound more applicable to the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord, than to that history in which David's flight is described from the face of his rebellious son." Exposition on Psalm 3.1 in Augustine of Hippo, *Expositions on The Book of Psalms* (trans. John Henry Parker; London: Oxford, 1847). See also Justin's approach in *Dialogues with Trypho* 97-99.
37. See Michael Cameron's explanation of Augustine view of scriptural interpretation in Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis*.
38. For Bates's proposed controls, see Bates, *Birth*, 175-202.
39. There is, of course, considerable debate over whether the authors of the NT respected OT contexts, which are far too complex to detail here. For a concise introduction with helpful notes for further reading, see Beale, *Handbook*, 1-18. For extended argumentation, see G. K. Beale, *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994); G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007).
40. Bates is sensitive to this charge and locates warrant for PE in the divine author and canon (Bates, *Birth*, 81-84). While I would agree that the Bible must finally be understood in light of the whole canon, I would contend that the biblical authors show a greater respect for the historical-progressive sequence of Scripture than PE allows.
41. Bates, *Birth*, 182, 188.
42. Language that emphasizes the reader is common when describing PE. Pierce describes how in PE one "views the text through the lens of a new participant," which becomes the basis for new meaning. Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations in Scripture*, 4-5. Pierce notes that this quality is the only one essential to prosopological exegesis: "the interpretation must introduce a new element to the text not otherwise clear from the original text itself." (p21). Docherty stresses this language as well (cf. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation*, 177).
43. See also Beale, *Handbook*, 1-18; D. A. Carson, "New Covenant Theology and Biblical Theology," in *God's Glory Revealed in Christ: Essays on Biblical Theology in Honor of Thomas R. Schreiner* (ed. Denny Burk, James M. Jr. Hamilton, and Brian Vickers; Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2019), 23-25.
44. Bates offers a set of "enabling" presuppositions. These include: 1) the reality of the divine economy; 2) the divine authorship of the Jewish Scripture; 3) The unity and plot-arrangement of the ancient Jewish Scripture and 4) Prophetic participation in the divine economy (Bates, *Birth*, 190-92). The first three are assumed in most evangelical approaches to interpretation (cf. Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 107-58). The only point of disagreement would be over the role of theodrama and character-taking in prophetic participation.

45. Cf. Bates, *Birth*, 74–76, 153–55; Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 250n71 (see index as well).
46. “David was not merely speaking about him, but rather this yet-to-be-revealed Jesus as making an in-character speech at the time of David through David.” Bates, *Birth*, 154. The material for this paragraph is from Bates, *Birth*, 153–55.
47. By “typology,” I mean repeated patterns in redemptive history which are tied to the progression of the biblical covenants. I follow the description given by Wellum: “As God’s plan is progressively revealed through the covenants, later Old Testament authors pick up the previous patterns, which then create a trajectory that New Testament authors rightly recognize as God-intended, predictive, and now coming to fulfillment in Christ and the new covenant age” (Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 114–18).
48. See also David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: The Theological Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments* (3rd ed., rev. updated; Downers Grove IL: IVP Academic; Apollos, 2010), 183.
49. Cf. also Ps 41:9 in John 13:18; see Beale and Carson, *NT Use of the OT*, 285–88.
50. This is interpretation is my own, but I contend that it holds true to Bates’s principles.
51. As noted by Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 102–3; Beale and Carson, *NT Use of the OT*, 530.
52. Luke’s report of Peter substitutes the cognate adjective (ἔρημος) for the participle (ἡρημωμένη) and abbreviates the second clause (the following italics represent omissions in Peter’s quotation: ἐν τοῖς σκηνώμασιν αὐτῶν μὴ ἔστω ὁ κατοικῶν), adding ἐν αὐτῇ at the end to maintain a sense of the original parallelism. The sense of the quote remains, but the inexact nature of the quotation is compatible with the idea that Peter is making a kind of comparison.
53. For interpretation of Ps 16 as David’s indicating resurrection, see commentary ad loc. in James M. Hamilton, *Psalms*, 2 vols. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, forthcoming). For alternative interpretations, see Craig S. Keener, *Acts: Introduction and 1:1-2:47*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 945–46. For a recent work on resurrection in the OT, see Eun-Jung Kim, “Reconsidering Eternal Life in the Old Testament: The Idea of Resurrection Rooted in the Torah” (PhD Dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).
54. See also Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 141–44.
55. While the exact nature of the psalter is still a matter of debate. Persuasive arguments have been made for a Davidic focus. For recent examples, see Adam D. Hensley, *Covenant Relationships and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Library of Hebrew Biblical Studies 666; London: T&T Clark, 2018); Hamilton, *Psalms*. At the very least, the Davidic promise after the exile would have added depth and nuance to the Davidic identity reflected in the Psalms.
56. See the quotation of Ps 22:1 in Matt 27:46 and Mark 43:51 as well as the allusions to Ps 22:18 in Matt 27:35 and Mark 15:24; Ps 22:7 in Matt 27:39 and Mark 15:29; Ps 22:8 in Matt 27:43.
57. I will interpret the superscription to refer to Davidic authorship. For a defense of this view, see Hamilton, *Psalms*, sec. 4.1-4.2. Pace Keener, who sees this as a Levitical psalm (Keener, *Acts*, 2012, 1:945–46). Keener seems to overlook the priestly functions that David assumed himself and for his line (cf. 2 Sam 6:13-18; 8:18; Ps. 110).
58. Bates, *Hermeneutics*, 194–99.
59. Cf. Peeler’s description of this technique in Hebrews in Amy L. B. Peeler, *You Are My Son: The Family of God in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (T&T Clark Library of Biblical Studies; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014), 33.
60. By way of illustration, H. G. Reventlow has commented on the difference between Origen’s commentary on Song of Songs and his sermons. In his commentary, he follows a general pattern of expositing the literal meaning of the text before moving on parallels in the church’s relation to Christ, the relationship of the soul to the word, and finally the application to his hearers. In the sermons, however, these interior steps do not appear, and one goes straight from “Let me kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!” (Song 1:2) to “Its meaning is, ‘How long does my bridegroom send me kisses’ though Moses and through the prophets?” See Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation*, 1:191. Both interpretations end at the same place. In the first, however, Origen is more careful to show the steps he took to get there. I propose that something similar is in view when we read these striking statements in Acts.
61. John seems to express a similar view of prophesy regarding Caiaphas’s declaration in John 11:49:52. There is little in John’s Gospel to indicate that Caiaphas intentionally prophesied that Jesus would die so that “the scattered children of God might be gathered into one” (11:52). Rather, John highlights the irony of the high priest’s words and that he spoke better than he knew despite his evil intentions (cf. D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (PNTC; Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1991), 421–23). I thank Paul Lamicella

- for pointing this out to me. Interestingly, this passage was taken as something of a paradigm for Augustine for seeing multiple meanings in all of Scripture (cf. Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis*, 274–76). A similar process may have happened with PE.
62. See Bates, *Birth*, 71–76.
 63. See also the arguments for Isa 55:3 referring to David's faithfulness in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 464–79.
 64. Bates addresses this issue in a footnote (Bates, *Birth*, 106n44). He contends that the author of Acts did “not appear to regard Isaiah 49:6 as a dialogue between the Father and the Son.” Interestingly, Bates entertains the conclusion discussed above, but does not call it typology. He contends, however, that considering the evidence elsewhere that the early church read the verse as dialogue between divine persons, that such is possible here as well. See Bates, *Birth*, 103, 105–6. Origen, for example, took this as the speech of Christ. See his Commentary on John Book 1.23. This raises the question, however, since Bates sees PE as a viable practice for the church today, how one could adjudicate between conflicting options.
 65. On prosopological oscillation, see Bates, *Birth*, 189–90, 201. Bates considers his work to be mostly descriptive but makes an argument in chapter seven of *The Birth of the Trinity* that PE reading, under the conditions he prescribes, is normative.
 66. On the extended implications that pertain to the NT use of the OT, see Beale and Carson, *NT Use of the OT*, 23f. Also see Wellum's definition of typology above.
 67. In his study, Bates concludes that the earliest Christians understood this Ps 2:7 to reflect a preincarnational begetting: “For most early Christian readers, these two speeches when understood in light of one another would have been taken as referring to conversations after time began about one and the same act of preincarnational begetting.” (Bates, *Birth*, 80; emphasis original). Bates, *Birth*, 80. For his interpretation of Psalm 110 see Bates, *Birth*, 46. For Psalm 40:6–8 in Heb 10:5–6 see Bates, *Birth*, 86. For a general summary of other approaches to the use of the OT in Hebrews, see George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews' Use of the Old Testament: Recent Trends in Research,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 1, no. 2 (April 2003): 271–94.
 68. For evidence of Hebrews as a sermon, see Jonathan Griffiths, *Hebrews and Divine Speech* (Library of New Testament Studies 507; London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
 69. Schreiner sees this as a clear allusion to the inheritance of the Davidic son in Ps 2:8. Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 380–81. Cf. also Rom 1:4 and Col 1:15–20. See also Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 183–88. For positions on 1:1–4, see commentary ad loc in William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary 47A (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991).
 70. I am indebted to Stephen Wellum for this insight. For the textual foundation of these verses see Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation*. Susan Docherty has noted that by placing Psalm 2:7 with other texts in a catena, its meaning is refined and sharpened. She notes the catchword of “son” and the messianic import evidenced in later Judaism. Docherty's points would have been strengthened by emphasizing the covenantal connections between the two texts: 2 Sam 7 grounds the affirmation of Psalm 2 and its ongoing role in the psalter.
 71. For PE explanations, see Bates, *Birth*, 80; Madison Pierce, “Hebrews 1 and the Son Begotten ‘Today,’” in *Retrieving Eternal Generation* (ed. Fred Sanders and Scott R. Swain; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 117–31.
 72. Gentry, “A Preliminary Evaluation,” 110–19. For an in-depth treatment of Psalm 110, see Matthew Habib Emadi, “The Royal Priest: Psalm 110 In Biblical-Theological Perspective” (Louisville, KY, PhD Dissertation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016).
 73. See Gentry, “A Preliminary Evaluation,” 109–10. Writing prophets like Isaiah, Gentry contends, depicted two lines of thought. First, salvation would come through YHWH as Israel's sole ruler (Isa 6, 24:23; 33:22; 41:21, 43:15, 44:6). Secondly, YHWH would act through the Davidic king (cf. Isa 7–11, 49–53). As these two lines develop, however, the distinctions between King YHWH and the Davidic king begin to blur (e.g. the divine names applied to the Davidic king in Isa 9:7). This explains the appellation of divine status to the Davidic king in Psalm 45.
 74. Gentry, “A Preliminary Evaluation,” 119–20.
 75. Cf. Bates, *Birth*, 46. However, I do not believe that eternal generation is in view here.
 76. See note above on Origen's sermons.
 77. Sequeira, “The Hermeneutics of Eschatological Fulfillment,” 163–240. but also develops and clarifies the original meaning in light of progressive biblical-theological development across the canon of Scripture and eschatological fulfillment in Christ. Furthermore, it is argued that an examination of citations and allusions

- to the OT illumines the biblical-theological framework and hermeneutical presuppositions guiding the author of Hebrews (his “interpretive perspective”
78. *Ibid.*, 238. but also develops and clarifies the original meaning in light of progressive biblical-theological development across the canon of Scripture and eschatological fulfillment in Christ. Furthermore, it is argued that an examination of citations and allusions to the OT illumines the biblical-theological framework and hermeneutical presuppositions guiding the author of Hebrews (his “interpretive perspective”
 79. *Ibid.*, 240. This departs from the core element of PE for Bates: “If not the ancient prophet, then a theodramatic character”: Bates, *Birth*, 182, 188. For Bates’s theodramatic interpretation, see Bates, *Birth*, 85–87.
 80. Sequeira, “The Hermeneutics of Eschatological Fulfillment,” 53–56, 99–100, 231n126. but also develops and clarifies the original meaning in light of progressive biblical-theological development across the canon of Scripture and eschatological fulfillment in Christ. Furthermore, it is argued that an examination of citations and allusions to the OT illumines the biblical-theological framework and hermeneutical presuppositions guiding the author of Hebrews (his “interpretive perspective” Also PE in Isa 8:17–18 in Heb 2:13, cf. 156, 160 but again based on typology and biblical theological exegesis.
 81. I believe this is so because Sequeira writes of Christ’s “speaking” as done *through* his life and work: “David’s speech, in its ‘theodramatic horizon,’ is reflective of a heavenly David—the eternal Son—who ultimately speaks these words in their fullest sense through his life and work” (Sequeira, 240). but also develops and clarifies the original meaning in light of progressive biblical-theological development across the canon of Scripture and eschatological fulfillment in Christ. Furthermore, it is argued that an examination of citations and allusions to the OT illumines the biblical-theological framework and hermeneutical presuppositions guiding the author of Hebrews (his “interpretive perspective”
 82. Bates, *Birth*, 153–55.
 83. *Ibid.*, 72–74. Though being that Paul addresses the audience as “children of Abraham,” it seems likely that the whole of redemptive history, which culminates in the fulfillment of the Davidic promise, is in view.
 84. *Ibid.*, 74.n65,76–79. Madison Pierce, for example, argues that an adoptionist christological reading of Ps 2:7 in Heb 1:5 fails because the prosopological reading of the author supposes his preexistence in Pierce, “Hebrews 1 and the Son Begotten “Today.”
 85. See Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 170–74.
 86. Cf. the excellent work in Andrew Ter Ern Loke, *The Origin of Divine Christology* (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph 169; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, 147–208; Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).
 87. “For most early Christian readers, these two speeches when understood in light of one another would have been taken as referring to conversations after time began about *one and the same act of preincarnational begetting.*” Bates, *Birth*, 80. Emphasis original.
 88. For typology as a feature of the OT, see Francis Foulkes, “The Acts of God,” in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994), 342–71; Beale, *Handbook*, 13–25, 101; James M. Hamilton, *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 77–94.
 89. In *The Birth of the Trinity*, Bates acknowledges that the evidence that OT prophets would have knowingly taken on these characters is slim, given that reading strategies like PE were developed later in a foreign context. Still, Bates appeals to the genuine dialogical shifts in the prophetic writings and contends that the symbolic roleplaying of the biblical prophets (e.g., Isa 20: 1–4; Jer 19: 1–11; Ezek 4: 1–5; Hos 1: 2–3) constitute links through the universal categories of speech, dialogue, and performance. However, prophetic roleplaying in the OT differs from the role-playing envisioned by PE in that the roles are marked as symbolic and their significance is explained, which is true of every example he cites. Hosea, for example, is told to take a wife of whoredom because the land has committed whoredom, and each of their children become explicit symbols of God’s judgment and restoration (Hos 1–3).
 90. Bates, *Birth*, 27–28, 175.
 91. Bates, *Birth*, 175. Cf. p. 110: “I have been arguing throughout this book that even when the church was first budding forth, Christians used a solution-by-person reading technique that is in direct continuity with those later Fathers who definitively framed the doctrine of the Trinity—to such a degree that it is not inappropriate to speak of the exercise of this reading strategy by the earliest Christians as necessary for the birth of the Trinity.”
 92. See Bates, *Birth*, 36–40. Bates acknowledges that there were a complex of terms used to express the personhood and being of God among the early centuries of the church.

93. *Ibid.*, 176.
94. *Ibid.*, 200–201.
95. This, I would contend, fits with Bates's description of the ancient notion of "person" which affirms a person "was capable of exercising personal will, had idiosyncratic affections, and were known as unique, distinct individuals" (Bates, *Birth*, 37). See also Loke, *The Origin of Divine Christology*, 19–20.
96. See Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 7. Bates has expressed concern that Bauckham's concept of divine identity diminishes "person" language (Bates, *Birth*, 23–26, 203–5). The personhood of Jesus and YHWH are presupposed in Bauckham's arguments, however. Still, including in the "divine identity" may not prove the best term for a wholistic account of the Trinity, it seems an appropriate term for describing the inclusion of the person Jesus in the divine being. See also discussion in Loke, *The Origin of Divine Christology*, 29–30.
97. In my view, this is underscored by early creeds like Nicaea, which do not make use of PE language or texts, at least those of a PE2 type.
98. The rich allusions which precede the cry only strengthen the identification. See the quotation of Ps 22:1 in Matt 27:46 and Mark 43:51 as well as the allusions to Ps 22:18 in Matt 27:35 and Mark 15:24; Ps 22:7 in Matt 27:39 and Mark 15:29; Ps 22:8 in Matt 27:43.
99. For an excellent summary of how redemptive history informs the work and person of Christ, see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 768–82.
100. As I have noted above, some advocates of PE in the NT, like Bates, may object to Augustine's assignment of three voices to the same speech (see Bates, *Birth*, 189–90, 201). However, the principles I illustrate here apply to those texts where only one prosopon is assigned.
101. See this trajectory in the latter prophets in Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles*, 133–49.
102. The inclusion King Saul between Samuel and David emphasizes that God sought an obedient king. Paul draws out this line of God-appointed leaders to move from David to Jesus, both the physical heir according to God's promise (13:23) and as a spiritual heir: one who pleased God. The focus on Saul in this section likely functions more as a foil for David than a counterpoint with the redeemed Saul of Tarsus. See Keener, *Acts*, 2013, 2:2061; Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 576–77; Contra Blaire A French, "The Completion of King Saul in Acts," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40, no. 4 (2018): 424–33. Blair's argument that Luke saw in Saul of Tarsus a comparison with King Saul is interesting, but the evidence is too thin to be convincing.