

THE SCRIPTURES WERE WRITTEN FOR OUR INSTRUCTION

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The theme of my paper is the question of the intent or purpose of the Scriptures, Old and New, for Christians and the Church throughout the centuries, including our own. The current background for this subject includes the often appropriate but sometimes exaggerated distinction between meaning and application, and particularly the emphasis laid on the *ad hoc* character of the NT, especially but not exclusively the letters. With regard to meaning and application, it is held that the exegete is to ascertain the meaning intended by the writer for the first recipients but that is not necessarily the same thing as what it means for us who are not the original recipients. With regard to the *ad hoc* character of the documents, this fact is assumed at times to carry intrinsic significance for our understanding of the intention or purpose of the Scriptures. Since the letters, for example, are written to this church or individual in this time and situation, with this problem or set of problems, then is it not evident that its contents and teaching are intended for the original recipients and only by extension or application to us?¹

No one should want to deny or contradict the obvious with reference to the situational setting about which most of the documents of the Bible themselves speak. In fact one should even enlarge the scope to say that every book within the canonical Scriptures would seem to warrant the designation of being *ad hoc*. That is the very nature of Scripture. It consists of documents given by God through the writers to his people in the particular situations in which they find themselves.

But the subtle fallacy is to draw from this obvious fact a kind of general operating conclusion that the contents and teachings must be therefore *ad hoc*, "for a special case only, without general application"² —that is, to deduce from the *ad hoc* writing situation (written to this group in

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¹ Cf. e.g. G. D. Fee, "Reflections on Church Order in the Pastoral Epistles, With Further Reflections on the Hermeneutics of *Ad Hoc* Documents," *JETS* 28 (1985) 141-151; D. M. Scholer, "1 Timothy 2:9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church's Ministry," *Women, Authority and the Bible* (ed. A. Mickelsen; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986) 193-219. For a presentation of the case and data for uniformity in principle and practice with regard to church leadership not only in Paul but in the entire NT see G. W. Knight, III, "Bishops/Presbyters and Deacons," *The Pastoral Epistles* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) 175-177. If there is this uniformity, then this aspect of church order at least is not *ad hoc*.

² A definition given in *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (ed. D. B. Guralnik; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984) 17.

this place) the hermeneutical deduction that the contents are *ad hoc* (written only or primarily for this group as specific instruction for them in that situation but not as a general principle or teaching). But it does not follow that *ad hoc* documents contain only *ad hoc* teaching for two reasons.

(1) *Ad hoc* situations are often addressed by those who intend to give general teachings and lasting principles that apply to all human beings. A classic example is the giving of the Ten Words through Moses to the people of Israel. The situation is clearly defined and specific as indicated by the introductory words from God himself: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Exod 20:2 NASB). But even though this is very much *ad hoc*, those who make reference to these Ten Words elsewhere in Scripture do not take it that this fact entails that their meaning, significance and application is to be limited to the original recipients and that therefore these words do not directly apply to those who do not find themselves in the same or nearly identical *ad hoc* situation. Our Lord, James and the apostle Paul all appeal to these Ten Words as God's intended standard for conduct for all human beings, including Gentile Christian converts who were never literally enslaved in Egypt or literally delivered from there by the God who gave these words and to whom they should now give obedience by obeying them.³

(2) The apostle Paul specifically indicates that these Scriptures "were written for our instruction" (Rom 15:4 NASB). In effect Paul is stating his understanding of the purpose and intent of Scripture, and this therefore influences his utilization of them in his letters. It is to this great fundamental statement of the apostle, repeated in these or other words and applied on several occasions, that I want to direct the major portion of our attention. The relevant statements that we will be considering are as follows (English quotations from the NASB [except 1 Cor 9:8–10 from the NIV]): "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom 15:4). "Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved" (1 Cor 10:5). "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (10:11). "Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: . . . Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us" (9:8–10).⁴ "Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reck-

³ Matt 19:17–19; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Jas 2:8–13; and esp. Rom 13:8–10.

⁴ The NIV is used for this passage because, in my judgment, it more accurately renders πάντως in this context by the word "surely" than does the NASB with its rendering "altogether." See the discussions in E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (1957; Grand Rapids: Baker, reprinted 1981) 47; G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 407–408.

oned unto him, but for our sake also to whom it will be reckoned” (Rom 4:23–24).

There are at least eight crucial component parts in these Pauline statements that interact with one another and that therefore may be drawn together for our study and consideration. First there is the verb γράφω, which appears in all four of the accounts (Rom 15:1–6 [three times, once in the compound προεγράφη]; 1 Cor 10:1–13 [twice]; 9:3–12 [twice]; Rom 4:13–25 [twice]). In the core sections the aorist passive form ἐγράφη, “it was written,” predominates (five times; alongside of ἐγράφη and προεγράφη the perfect passive γέγραπται is used in Rom 15:3; 1 Cor 10:7; 9:9; Rom 4:17). In view of the fact that in each context the OT is either cited or referred to, it is evident that the writing activity to which the verb ἐγράφη refers in the past tense was the writing of the OT Scriptures (corroborated by the temporal compound προεγράφη, “was written in earlier times,” and by the perfect passive γέγραπται).

Second, this is also corroborated by Paul’s use of the noun γραφή in the plural in the context of the ἵνα clause in Rom 15:4 describing the intended effect of that which “was written.” That description of the effect of that which “was written,” which in this clause is now designated by τῶν γραφῶν, can only mean that these “writings” are “the Scriptures.” Furthermore the usage of the verb and noun here to refer to the canonical Scriptures⁵ corresponds to Paul’s usage elsewhere.⁶

Third, in each specific passage the apostle directly correlates and ties the verb ἐγράφη to a group that he designates by the pronoun “us” (a case declension of ἡμεῖς according to the context and in the Rom 15:4 passage ἡμετέραν). Although a minimalist understanding of the pronoun “us” would be to say that it includes (only) Paul and his readers, the Pauline usage elsewhere would suggest that often he has the entire Christian community in mind.⁷ And the contextual factors surrounding these statements that demonstrate the intended scope of this pronoun require the more inclusive understanding. For example, Paul’s argument about God’s reckoning to those who have a faith like that of Abraham (Rom 4:23–24 in its context) is certainly meant to include the entire Christian community who are so justified and not just the readers of the letter to the Romans. Furthermore since he is generalizing about the principle of paying spiritual leaders for their labors (1 Cor 9:3–12) and not referring just to the Corinthian situation, as is evident from his reference to other laborers in other places (v. 5), it would appear that here too the “us” is the entire Christian community—that is, any and all who have spiritual leaders laboring for them.

⁵ Generally acknowledged by most commentators and lexicographers. Some say that the term γραφή refers only or primarily to a specific passage (see n. 6 *infra*). The use of the plural τῶν γραφῶν here in connection with the specifying ὅσα would indicate that here Paul has the broader perspective in mind when he enunciates this principle. It is true of course that his use of ὅσα indicates that he also has every particular part of the whole of Scripture in mind. See n. 14 *infra*.

⁶ See the documentation and discussion in Knight, *Pastoral Epistles* 445.

⁷ E.g. Rom 6:4; 8:23; 1 Cor 8:6; 9:25; 12:13; 15:52; Phil 3:3; 1 Thess 5:8–10; Titus 3:3, 5.

It would appear from these examples that the broadest Christian community is in mind when he says that the Scriptures were written for “us.”

Fourth, this understanding of Paul’s intended meaning for the pronoun “us” is made specific by his own declaration in which he categorizes the “us” as those “upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Cor 10:11). In a paper like this, time does not allow for an exhaustive and minute examination of the component parts of this statement. But its essential meaning is readily acknowledged even by those who may disagree on the meaning of a particular word—namely, that it refers to those who are living in the end times, the times of fulfillment that the promised Messiah Jesus Christ has brought about by his birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and present rule.⁸ Certainly the ends of the ages have not come only on the Corinthians, and thus it must be a general description of the Christian era. Since this general statement is given to indicate the people in view in the very maxim that we are considering—that is, “written for our instruction”—we should therefore understand that it is Paul’s definition of the “us” (or “our”) who are in view every time he utilizes the terminology of “us” or “our” in the phrases “written for us” or “written for our instruction.”

Fifth, in one of the statements (1 Cor 10:5) Paul does not use the word “written” but rather refers to “examples” (τύποι)⁹ that happened, and in this statement he also relates that the examples are “for us.” Furthermore when he returns to this point in 10:11 about “an example” (τυπικῶς) that happened he restates the principle in terms of the language we are studying—that is, “they are written for our instruction.” In other words, he focuses on the written Scriptures as the source of our instruction.

And that brings us to the sixth crucial component part. The connection between the “us” and the “was written” in these passages is provided by a preposition used in the passage to indicate purpose or reason (εἰς in Rom 15:4, πρὸς in 1 Cor 10:11, διὰ in 1 Cor 9:8 ff.; Rom 4:23–24). Paul’s explicit statement in Rom 4:23–24 (“Now not for his sake only was it written”) asserts that Scripture was not written as a record “only” for those to whom or about whom it was written but that “also” it was written for “us.” (This same understanding of not only/but also [and not either/or] is intended in 1 Cor 9:8–10¹⁰ even though stated in the hyperbolic terms often used by Biblical writers when they want to emphasize the point they are

⁸ See e.g. Fee, *First Epistle* 459; R. M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical τύπος Structures* (AUSS 2; Berrien Springs, 1981) 271–274.

⁹ I understand τύπος here and τυπικῶς in v. 11 to be used in the sense of examples, not types in the strict sense of the word, because of the larger context that refers to negative examples by analogy and not foreshadowings *per se*. Fee puts it aptly and tersely when in commenting on τυπικῶς he states that it does not mean “typologically” here, as the following phrase (lit. “for our warning”) indicates (*First Epistle* 458 n. 41). In v. 6 where τύπος occurs the following language is also that of a negative warning.

¹⁰ W. C. Kaiser, Jr., suggested that the OT passage already referred to humans as well as oxen in his presidential address to the ETS, “The Current Crisis in Exegesis and the Apostolic Use of Deuteronomy 25:4 in 1 Corinthians 9:8–10,” *JETS* 21 (1978) 13–14.

making.)¹¹ Here we are at the heart of Paul's view of the written Scriptures. He sees their intent and purpose as including and encompassing the entire Christian community.

Seventh, Paul indicates the way that Scripture functions with reference to "us"—namely, it was written for our instruction. This is evident in that in each of those passages Paul points to the OT passages he refers to or cites as inherently and self-evidently instructing his readers about the matter at hand. But in addition, in two of the passages he says explicitly that the Scriptures were "written for our instruction," using the terms διδασκαλία¹² in Rom 15:4 and νουθεσία in 1 Cor 10:11. The former term designates teaching or instruction in general, while the latter term emphasizes the corrective note of warning and admonition.¹³ The significance of these two terms when they are joined to the verb "was written" by a preposition "for" expressing purpose and when they are made specific by the word "our" designating the intended recipients is that the clause as a whole delineates that the Scriptures that were written were intended to be instruction for "us" Christians. This delineation by definition excludes any understanding that Paul only meant to speak about the Scriptures' indirectly and derivatively instructing "us" Christians.

Finally, the apostle specifies the entirety of Scripture in all its parts when he writes that "whatever [everything that] was written in earlier times was written for our instruction" (Rom 15:4) using the relative ὅσα ("whatever") to indicate that every particular part is so intended.¹⁴ One is reminded of his later statement: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for . . . instruction" (2 Tim 3:16).¹⁵

Paul's insistence on the fact that the Scriptures were written for us, which he reinforces by his denial that it was written only for the original subjects or recipients (Rom 4:23–24), has enormous implications for our overarching approach to Scripture and for our general hermeneutical stance or approach to Scripture. To let an *ad hoc* approach become our first or dominant approach is, in my opinion, to go exactly counter not only to the hermeneutical approach Paul himself uses but also to that which in these passages he demonstrates to be the approach faithful to God's purpose in causing the Scriptures to be written for us.

Questions may well arise and become sources of controversy when the Pauline principle is restated in the same general sense in which he states it. But rather than giving undue weight to these often appropriate concerns and letting them overshadow or overturn the principle, would it not

¹¹ See for a fine treatment of this principle in general, albeit discussed with reference to Jesus and the gospels, R. H. Stein, *Difficult Sayings in the Gospels: Jesus' Use of Overstatement and Hyperbole* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985).

¹² It is interesting to note that διδασκαλία is also the word used in 2 Tim 3:16.

¹³ For νουθεσία cf. J. Behm, *TDNT* 4.1019–1022. The noun is found only in Paul in the NT, the other occurrences being Eph 6:4; Titus 3:10.

¹⁴ ὅσος when used absolutely, as the neuter plural ὅσα is used here, means "everything that" (BAGD 586).

¹⁵ See n. 12 *supra*.

be better to see how the apostle Paul, the other apostles and NT writers, and most of all our Lord himself work with this principle? Furthermore, can we detect in the articulation and application of the principle considerations that govern the application? I would suggest that Paul posits this principle with at least two considerations in mind and that these considerations are also at work elsewhere in Scripture. (1) There is continuity in God's dealings with humans, and therefore what he has written earlier he intends for later recipients as well (rather self-evident in, for example, Rom 4:23–24 and stated as such therein).¹⁶ Also assumed in this consideration is that God's ways with mankind are similar and consistent and that therefore mankind needs similar instruction in various ages because of our common identity as humans and God's universal and uniform moral and ethical instruction to us (e.g. 1 Cor 10:1–13). (2) Fulfillment is evidenced by the fact that Paul speaks of his hermeneutical principle functioning in the situation where the end of the ages has come (10:11). This consideration assumes that God was acting in history with a view to the fulfillment brought about in Christ and that what he was having written down was also with a view to the significance of those writings not only for the original recipients but also for those to whom this fulfillment would be brought and toward whom these events were pointing and unfolding. Both the former and latter are the guiding considerations, for example, when salvation and ethics are in view. And the latter will play a decisive role when, for example, questions about circumcision and the ceremonial law are under consideration. In these cases fulfillment functions differently—that is, in the sense of setting the shadows and types aside now that the reality has come. And these considerations will not only be true of Paul but of others in the NT.

Let us now examine these considerations at work not only in Paul but also in our Lord's practice and in that of the other NT writers. One of the first areas in which this overarching hermeneutical principle comes to expression is in the messianic and soteriological intention of the Scriptures. Paul says to Timothy that the OT writings "are able to give you the wisdom which leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 3:15). In Rom 4:23–24 Paul argues that since God has justified Abraham by faith in God and his promises he will also surely justify us by faith in God and his promises in Christ. Here we see continuity as the overarching note in this argument because the Scriptures posit one way of salvation throughout, as Paul argues in Galatians¹⁷ as well as here in Romans. Like Peter and others, Paul argues with the Jews that the OT has spoken of the resurrection of the Messiah and that this Jesus so fulfills the prophecies about the Messiah that he must be the

¹⁶ "The general principle for Paul here . . . is rather that what is written in scripture, particularly about matters of faith and unbelief, was always intended by the one who inspired the scripture to have applications to believers, not least to those who came to faith in the new age introduced by Christ" (J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* [WBC 38A; Dallas: Word, 1988] 240).

¹⁷ Gal 3:6–29.

Christ.¹⁸ In doing so he and they are only echoing the teaching of Jesus himself. One is reminded of our Lord's words in Luke 24 where he speaks about "the things concerning him in all the Scriptures" (v. 27) and of his words that "all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (v. 44). Most striking is the stern rebuke that he gives: "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" (v. 25). The entailment of this rebuke is relevant to our study. Since our Lord states that the Scriptures speak of him and that these things are being fulfilled and also draws implications and conclusions for those who read those Scriptures that they ought to believe them, it would seem inappropriate to designate the apostles' similar handling of these Scriptures in Acts and the letters as reinterpretations and applications when they handle the Scriptural testimony to Jesus in the believing way he has taught to them. The apostle Peter also describes the Scriptures in terms of fulfillment and thus in terms of their having been written for us, and furthermore he does so by saying that the human authors had this perspective. He says that "the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you" (1 Pet 1:11) had the reality "revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (v. 12).

The fulfillment motif also plays a significantly crucial role in the whole question of the continuation of the ceremonial law and its requirements. The issue is clearly stated twice over in Acts 15: "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (v. 1). "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses" (v. 5). The question is finally and ultimately resolved by the recognition of Scripture's teaching in Amos 9:11–12 (cited in Acts 15:15–18) that in the age of messianic fulfillment the Gentiles would be received as Gentiles among God's people, not as those observing the ceremonial requirements given by God to the Jews. In accord with this understanding Paul will speak of the ceremonial ordinance aspects of the Law that had been a barrier between Jew and Gentile as abolished in the death of Christ (Eph 2:15) while still commending the moral aspects of the Law to the predominantly Gentile church in the same letter (cf. 5:31; 6:1–3). This is the same approach he takes in many of his other letters. The most telling and terse statement to that effect is in 1 Cor 7:19 where the two aspects are dealt with in one verse, one indicated as not relevant and the other indicated as being of continuing obligation and necessity: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God." Since the Scriptures were written for our instruction we should also understand what they say about the rituals and ceremonies in the light of apostolic understanding of the teaching of those very OT Scriptures themselves.

¹⁸ Cf. Acts 2:22–36; 8:26–35; 9:22; 13:16–39.

In examining the core passages that have constituted the focal point of our study, we are coming to realize that in each place Paul is dealing with the responses God expects of humans.¹⁹ In 1 Cor 9:8 ff. he appeals to the theocratic case law that specifies that oxen must not be muzzled when threshing (citing Deut 25:4 in 1 Cor 9:9). Paul is persuaded that this law, like others, reflects God's view of how people should relate not only to animals but also to human beings when those human beings are involved in laboring for our benefit, as he indicates in his transitional words that correlate the OT to his argument: "Yes, it was for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you?" (vv. 10–11). This is not the only situation in which Paul appeals to the theocratic case laws. He does it also earlier in 1 Cor 5:13. There he refers to one or more of the passages in Deuteronomy²⁰ in which God in his written word instructs the people of God to remove the unrepentant wicked man from their midst (which in the OT context is done by stoning him). And therefore Paul's entire description of the action to be taken is that of removing the man from their midst and not associating with him, not even eating with him. We note however that the action Paul enjoins is not that of stoning but rather of putting him out of the fellowship with a view to his repentance (cf. 1 Cor 5:5). That this spiritual action becomes the NT principle for church discipline in general, rather than the act of stoning, is borne out by his comments in 2 Cor 2:6–8 where he urges that one who had been disciplined should be forgiven, comforted and restored (impossible if he has been stoned to death). Paul's utilization of this theocratic case law shows that he regards it as teaching an important principle that must be followed by the Church, even though not in the theocratic form of stoning to death but rather in the form appropriate to the nontheocratic, nonnational spiritual entity that the Church is in distinction from the Israel of the OT. Here the apostle takes account of the difference that fulfillment has brought about and at the same time maintains the principle of continuity for the instruction as it relates to the Church, and in doing so he also has "written for our instruction."

In the remaining key passages that we are considering, the perspective given by Paul is that the moral teaching of the OT is more direct than in the case law situations, and that is what we would expect because here the note of continuity and similarity is the main factor and is not encumbered by the difference between the theocratic nation and the transnational Church. First Corinthians 10 brings into focus Paul's concern for their vaunted knowledge and standing, which may be leading them to think that they are free to engage even in eating meat in the idol temple

¹⁹ Even Rom 4:1–25 is arguing that God wants humans to respond to him in faith rather than with works as the basis for their righteousness and acceptance with him.

²⁰ Deuteronomy 17:7 is the first and most likely, but *UBSGNT*⁴ also lists Deut 19:19; 22:21, 24; 24:7.

itself. In that chapter he lays out the analogy between them and the Israelites in order to demonstrate to the Corinthians that the Israelites' sinful actions and God's response are negative "examples" that God had recorded for the benefit of Christians. They had a kind of baptism and a spiritual food. Christ was even with them in a preincarnate way providing these blessings (vv. 1–4). "Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness" (v. 5). Their example for us is "that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved" (v. 6). Neither should we be idolaters, act immorally, try the Lord, nor grumble (vv. 7–10). Thus Christians may not sit and eat at a table in the idol temple because to do so is to partake through the idolatry in fellowship with the demons (vv. 16–22). Paul is asserting that the very historical episodes of Israel provide a negative example for Christians and that the use of these episodes for that purpose is what God intended when he had them "written for our instruction" (v. 11). This intentionality of God is there because the Scriptures are not merely the recording of ancient history but of the overarching plan of God now brought to fulfillment for us "upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (v. 11). Episodes that took place are not random events but evidences of how God relates to his people, what he expects of them and how he responds to their faith and also their willful disobedience.²¹ Thus the analogy between Christians and Israelites is a one-to-one analogy of professed believers with certain presumed spiritual advantages and a presumed spiritual standing. Hence the lesson is clear: One's presumed spiritual standing does not preclude one from being tempted and falling into sin. It was true of the Israelites and is therefore also true for Christians. So as his transition from the Israelite examples to the Christian situation Paul gives this exhortation: "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (v. 12).

Romans 15:1–7 brings to a conclusion Paul's treatment of the weak-and-strong discussion. The lead statement gives his summary exhortation: "Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification" (vv. 1–2). To validate this exhortation he appeals to the example of Christ who evidenced that he did not please himself by bearing the reproaches of men intended for God and cites Ps 69:9 in which this is stated. Then Paul correlates Christ's action and attitude to our own by immediately saying that "whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom 15:4). It is clear that Paul wants them to have the hope and expectation and the willing perseverance and encouragement taught in the Scriptures and provided by God himself (v. 5) to persevere in bearing one another's weaknesses and pleasing one's neighbor for his good, to his edification (i.e. the point of his beginning exhortation). Paul enlarges on the significance

²¹ P. Fairbairn, "The Historical Element in God's Revelation," *Classical Evangelical Essays in OT Interpretation* (ed. W. C. Kaiser, Jr.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972) 72–79, merits consideration.

of this truth in his concluding words: that they will come to be of the same mind with one another and accept one another to the glory of God (vv. 5–7). The point of his quoting the Scripture passage in referring to the example of Christ is because that Scripture passage provided the standard for Christ's conduct, and he is convinced that it provides the standard for Christians' conduct because "whatever" was written in Scripture, including these words, was written for our instruction.

What is so remarkable and instructive about Paul's use of the Scriptures under the rubric of their having been written for our instruction is his understanding that they directly instruct us and apply to us. He writes almost as if there were no gap at all between the Scriptures written years before and the "us" for whom they are written as instruction, or as if the analogy and similarities are so great that the gap is thus thereby not only easily bridged but intended by God to be bridged for he had us also in mind when they were written. This is particularly relevant in that most of the passages are used to urge the appropriate conduct that the Scriptures have indicated. Only when the redemptive work of Christ fulfills and abrogates the OT types and shadows (e.g. the ceremonial law and the Jewish theocratic entity), removes the condemning curse of the Law, and lays the nonrepeatable foundation for the NT Church does Paul indicate that these aspects of the Scriptures have been thereby fulfilled, abrogated or removed. But in no case does he write about conduct in the realm of morality and say or imply that the Scriptures were not in that case written for our instruction.²²

This demonstrated understanding of the apostle ought to guide our understanding and utilization of the Scriptures also. Since this principle is true of the OT Scriptures written before the end of the ages has come, how much more is it true of the NT Scriptures written in the period of the end of the ages in which we today and they who originally received it both live! Since the ethical instruction has bridged that most significant gap between the OT and the NT and applies to us, certainly where there is no real gap of religious moment between us and the NT Church we should expect an even more direct correlation between the NT teachings and ourselves. We will not need to argue, as Paul did in 1 Corinthians 10, the analogies between the OT ceremonies and situations and ours, for they will not be ones of analogy but of identity in the religious realm.

²² Paul's statement about the Christian being "not under law but under grace" (Rom 6:14–15) must be understood in its contextual setting and by the very contrast between the terms law and grace to refer to soteriology, not ethics and morality. Later in the same letter he commands Christians to fulfill the Law and then spells out the Law he is referring to by listing several of the Ten Commandments (13:8–10). Thus Christians are not under law as a means of salvation, but they may not therefore presume that they may disobey it ("Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!" [6:15]). Rather, as Paul says, they must seek to fulfill the Law, and they must look to the redeeming work of Christ within them to accomplish that through the Spirit, "in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (8:4).

We will still need to struggle with how we obey such instructions of the apostle as that of greeting one another with a holy kiss (Rom 16:16²³) when we live in a culture where kissing among heterosexual men outside the family circle is not practiced and is even frowned on and felt to be a very uncomfortable thing to do.²⁴ Perhaps we will recognize it as the specificity of the concrete situation (where Paul is giving greetings to those in the church in Rome) conveying a principle, as the apostle Peter enjoined honoring the king as the concrete expression of submitting to civil authorities (1 Pet 2:17).²⁵ But we will still seek to comply with an analogous cultural expression of the exhortation, for it is written for our instruction.²⁶ We should not use these relatively few cultural differences that occur in the expressions of apostolic teaching to nullify or set at naught the apostle's explicit assertion that the Scriptures were written for our instruction so that we would end up saying or implying, "No, they were written for them, not for us, as the cultural differences make plain, and therefore they do not directly instruct us and guide our conduct."²⁷ Let us rather reaffirm this hermeneutical principle of the apostle Paul by constantly letting it guide us in our understanding of and response to the Scriptures, because the Scriptures themselves say that they "were written for our instruction."

²³ See also 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; cf. 1 Pet 5:14.

²⁴ Cf. J. Ellington, "Kissing in the Bible: Form and Meaning," *BT* 41 (1990) 409–416.

²⁵ Notice that this specificity follows the general statement of principle in 1 Pet 2:13, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution," which is itself immediately followed by a specific application to "a king" (v. 13) or "governors" (v. 14). Like Peter, Paul begins his treatment of civil authority with a nonspecific statement of principle in which the civil authority is only defined in terms of God's authority and their existence being a result of his providential establishment: "Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God" (Rom 13:1). Paul makes no specific application to a concrete civic figure such as a king, although he does speak in the terminology of the day when he says the civil authority does "not bear the sword for nothing" (v. 4). For a consideration of the question of kings and slaves as it relates to the normative character of the Scriptures "written for our instruction" see G. W. Knight, III, *The Role Relationship of Men and Women: New Testament Teaching* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1985) 9–15.

²⁶ See the treatment of this question by S. J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and of the Epistle of Jude* (New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) 209–210. He begins his exposition by saying that "the practice of greeting one another differs from culture to culture" and then concludes by saying that "the matter," or how we do so, "in the universal Christian church" is "part of local custom."

²⁷ For the outworkings of this kind of approach cf. e.g., in addition to the works cited in n. 1 *supra*, A. Padgett, "The Pauline Rationale for Submission: Biblical Feminism and the *hina* Clauses of Titus 2:1–10," *EvQ* 59 (1987) 39–52, and a response to it in Knight, "Motivations for Appropriate Conduct" (*Pastoral Epistles*).