

CHALLENGES TO INTERTEXTUALITY AND CHRISTOTELISM: A NEW MODEL OF CANONICAL- LINGUISTIC PRIMING

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Abstract: *First proposed by Douglas Moo and developed more recently by G. K. Beale, the so-called “assimilated use” of earlier texts suggests that occasionally New Testament authors cite or allude to texts from the Old Testament simply because the writers are so steeped in these texts that they form the intellectual framework by which the biblical authors think and write. This understanding sits uncomfortably with conventional approaches to intertextuality, which seek to establish more rigorous criteria for how subsequent writers advance the arguments, add to the meaning, or signal the consummation of earlier texts. This approach also challenges aspects of Christotelic interpretation, which seeks to relate biblical texts through a redemptive lens to Christ by privileging the hermeneutical priority of the NT to expand the intention of the OT. This essay incorporates insights from corpus linguistics, with its emphasis on formulaic language, and from the subsidiary field of lexical priming, to build on the conclusions of Moo and Beale. I designate this approach “canonical-linguistic priming” and argue that it provides a useful way to approach some difficult texts in the interpretation of the NT by evaluating them in the light of rhetorical convention. Several examples from Matthew are analyzed under this rubric to account for ways in which the NT writer repurposes earlier texts that are formulized for rhetorical purposes.*

Key words: *intertextuality, Christotelism, progressive covenantalism, hermeneutics, the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, lexical priming, corpus linguistics, formulaic language, rhetorical use, Matthew, Jeremiah*

Writing over thirty years ago, Douglas Moo suggested an overlooked category of literary connection between the OT and NT. He proposed that some citations and allusions arise from the degree to which earlier biblical texts permeated the thinking of later biblical authors:

Granted the prominence played by the Old Testament in the lives and cultural milieu of the New Testament authors, it is more than probable that they frequently used scriptural language *other than as authoritative proof*... New Testament writers often—without intending to provide a ‘correct’ interpretation of the Old Testament text—use Old Testament language *as a vehicle of expression*.¹

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¹ Douglas J. Moo, “The Problem of *Sensus Plenior*,” in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, ed. D. A. Carson and John Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 188, emphasis added.

More recently, G. K. Beale identified a similar category that he terms the “assimilated use” of Scripture.² He explains this as occurring “simply because [the authors’] minds are so steeped in Scripture that such verbal patterns provide the linguistic frameworks in which they think.”³ These formulaic expressions shaped later texts by the conventions of ancient rhetoric to impact and persuade readers by appealing to a common well of cultural fluency and authority.

Modern biblical scholarship has often neglected this aspect. The so-called assimilated use rubric sits uncomfortably with some conventional approaches to classifying the ways in which NT writers use literary citations, allusions, or echoes from the OT. Frequently scholars have favored more rigorous criteria for defining how later writers advance the arguments, augment the meaning, or signal the consummation of earlier texts.⁴

I. INTERTEXTUALITY

Many have adopted the terminology and methods of intertextuality,⁵ which emerged during the late 1960’s in the context of French philosophical post-structuralism.⁶ Coinage of the term *intertextuality* is traced most often to a journal article appearing in 1967 by a Bulgarian-born, French Ph.D. student named Julia Kristeva, who presented a detailed critique of the theories of a lesser-known Rus-

² G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 91.

³ G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), xxv.

⁴ See Peter J. Leithart, *Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 138–39; Rex Mason, “Why Is Second Zechariah So Full of Quotations?,” in *The Book of Zechariah and Its Influence*, ed. Christopher M. Tuckett (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 22.

⁵ The origin and development of intertextuality have received thorough treatment. See Judith Still and Michael Worton, “Introduction,” in *Intertextuality: Theories and Practice*, ed. Michael Worton and Judith Still (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1990), 1–33; Heinrich F. Plett, “Intertextualities,” in *Intertextuality*, ed. Heinrich F. Plett, *Research in Text Theory* 15 (New York: de Gruyter, 1991), 3–29; Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein, “Figures in the Corpus: Theories of Influence and Intertextuality,” in *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*, ed. Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 3–36; Mary Orr, *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts* (Cambridge, UK: Blackwell, 2003), 6–36; Graham Allen, *Marty Intertextuality* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 8–58. On the origin and development of intertextuality in biblical studies, see Steven Moyses, “Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” in *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honour of J. L. North*, ed. Steve Moyses, JSNTSS 189 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 14–18; Patricia Tull, “Intertextuality and the Hebrew Scriptures,” *CurBS* 8 (2000): 66–71; Miller, “Intertextuality in Old Testament Research,” 285–94; Timothy K. Beal, “Ideology and Intertextuality: Surplus of Meaning and Controlling the Means of Production,” in *Reading between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Dana N. Fewell (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 27–39; Stefan Alkier, “Intertextuality and the Semiotics of Biblical Texts,” in *Reading the Bible Intertextually*, ed. Richard B. Hays, Stefan Alkier, and Leroy A. Huizenga (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 4–7; Leroy A. Huizenga, “The Old Testament in the New, Intertextuality and Allegory,” *JSNT* 38.1 (2015): 23–30.

⁶ See *The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. “Post-structuralism,” by Gary Gutting, 282–32.

sian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin.⁷ Kristeva proposed the term *intertextuality* as a means of positing a new interpretation, and in reality a subversion, of the traditional roles played by author, text, and reader. In her construal, the author of any text is in reality simply a reader rewriting another text. The putative author thus enjoys no claim to the reality of the text or to the determination of its meaning. Texts, by Kristeva's definition, have no boundaries nor fixed chronology. Texts speak only in perpetual dialogue with other texts (synchronic relationships subsume diachronic).⁸ The locus of meaning shifts radically away from the author—who in the traditional sense no longer exists—toward the reader. The reader assumes the author's vacated role, taking control of the interpretive process and formulating the ipso facto "meaning" of the text.⁹

For several reasons, intertextuality remains a controversial approach. On the one hand, defining *intertextuality* remains notoriously elusive, with little consensus on a standard definition.¹⁰ On the other, many criticize the practitioners of intertextuality for their disregard of the term's origin and meaning, their inconsistent and ill-defined criteria, their errant notions about authors and readers, and their anachronistic assumptions about the literacy of ancient audiences.¹¹

II. CHRISTOTELISM

A more recent method or lens for understanding the ways in which NT writers use the OT, a method favored especially by Reformed evangelicals, is the so-called Christotelic approach. The term *Christotelic* was coined apparently by Peter

⁷ "Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman," *Critique* 23 (1967): 438–65. The essay was published in 1969 in a work on literary theory and was translated into English in 1980. See Julia Kristeva, *Σημειωτική: Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1969), 66; Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 66.

⁸ Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel," 86–87.

⁹ William Irwin rightly critiques the fallacy of this shift in determining meaning as the violation of "the ontology of intertextuality." William Irwin, "Against Intertextuality," *Philosophy and Literature* 28 (2004): 235. For extended philosophical critiques of these ideas from an evangelical perspective, see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998); D. A. Carson, *The Gaggling of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

¹⁰ Irwin, "Against Intertextuality," 227–28; Samuel Emadi, "Intertextuality in New Testament Scholarship: Significance, Criteria, and the Art of Intertextual Reading," *CurBR* 14.1 (2015): 9; Fernando Milán, "Biblia e intertextualidad: una aproximación," *Scripta Theologica* 48.2 (2016): 361.

¹¹ Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 8; Thomas R. Hatina, "Intertextuality and Historical Criticism in New Testament Studies: Is There a Relationship?," *BibInt* 7 (1999): 42; Douglas Moo, "Paul's Universalizing Hermeneutic in Romans," *SBJT* 11.3 (2007): 83–84; Stanley E. Porter, "Allusions and Echoes," in *As It Is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture*, ed. Stanley Porter and Christopher Stanley, SBL Symposium Series 50 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 29–41; Geoffrey D. Miller, "Intertextuality in Old Testament Research," *CurBR* 9.3 (2011): 283–309; Leroy A. Huizenga, *The New Isaac: Tradition and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew*, NovTSup 131 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 45; David I. Yoon, "The Ideological Inception of Intertextuality and Its Dissonance in Current Biblical Studies," *CurBR* 12.1 (2013): 58–76; Russell L. Meek, "Intertextuality, Inner-Biblical Exegesis, and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Ethics of a Methodology," *Bib* 95.2 (2014): 280–84.

Enns.¹² He characterizes Christotelic interpretation as the approach that interprets the OT in the same way the apostles did, with a view toward the climactic death and resurrection of Christ. Only in the light of this end/goal (τέλος) can the interpreter understand the true purpose of Scripture. Enns distinguishes this approach from Christocentrism, which asserts that “every verse, passage, or image of the Old Testament leads the reader to Christ or that Christ is in every last portion of the Old Testament.”¹³ In assessing Christotelism, one must admit a sense in which every Christian interpreter is to a degree Christotelic. That is to say, the NT unequivocally attests that Christ is the end or goal (τέλος) of certain OT forms, such as the Mosaic law (Rom 10:4), the Levitical sacrifices (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 9:11–28), prescribed festival observances (1 Cor 5:7–8), and certain Jewish identity markers (Rom 2:28–29). At the same time, the label itself fails to demarcate hermeneutical boundary lines.¹⁴ “Christotelic” falls short of satisfactory definition by failing to delineate how the interpreter understands the NT’s use of the OT, the nature of typology, and the relationship between Israel and the church.¹⁵

¹² Peter Enns, “Apostolic Hermeneutics and an Evangelical Doctrine of Scripture: Moving Beyond a Modernist Impasse,” *WTJ* 65 (2003): 277; Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 177; Enns, “Fuller Meaning, Single Goal: A Christotelic Approach to the New Testament Use of the Old in Its First-Century Interpretive Environment,” in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 167–217.

¹³ Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 177.

¹⁴ The terms *Christotelism* and *Christocentrism* blur somewhat, given that interpreters often employ differing hermeneutical methods under the same label or claim one label while espousing hermeneutical methods sometimes associated with the other. In general, however, Christocentric interpreters use symbolism and typology to derive Christological implications from the biblical text at the level of the words and phrases (i.e., as part of the initial exegetical process in deriving the meaning of words and phrases), while Christotelic interpreters use symbolism and typology at the level of biblical theology (i.e., in the biblical-theological correlation of the text to the canon or in the later stages of exegesis in drawing out implications/applications). Both approaches privilege the NT hermeneutically by using later Scripture to interpret the meaning of antecedent revelation and deriving this meaning/significance through a Christological redemptive lens. Vern Poythress, for example, designates himself a *Christocentric* interpreter: “I extend Christocentricity not only to every verse, but in principle to every word in every verse” (“Christocentric Preaching,” *SBJT* 22.3 [2018]: 66n5). He thus interprets the phrase “the word of the LORD came to Abram” in Gen 15:1, 4, as denoting specifically that Christ spoke to Abram: “Because of the necessity of mediation, we can confidently infer the presence of Christ and his work when God speaks to Abram. Christ’s role ... anticipates his incarnation and verbal ministry on earth” (61). Daniel Block, on the other hand, designates himself a *Christotelic* interpreter, by which he means: “Not every text points to Jesus Christ as Messiah, but every text presents a vital part of that story of Jesus, ‘who is also called the Christ.’” Daniel I. Block, “Christotelic Preaching: A Plea for Hermeneutical Integrity and Missional Passion,” *SBJT* 22.3 (2018): 14. He thus characterizes the same phrase “the word of the LORD came to Abram” (Gen 15:1, 4) as a “word event formula” signifying dramatic divine communication by means of a visionary event. The latter carries “striking” but uncertain relation to the incarnational language of John’s Gospel, which is brought to bear in later stages of the interpretive process (20–21).

¹⁵ For example, Stephen Wellum rejects Peter Enns’s approach to Christotelism while still adopting that nomenclature for his own approach. Stephen Wellum, “From Alpha to Omega: A Biblical-Theological Approach to God the Son Incarnate,” *JETS* 63.1 (2020): 82n43.

More recently the conversation around Christotelic interpretation has been taken up by a newer interpretive synthesis called progressive covenantalism.¹⁶ As a movement, progressive covenantalism is of relatively recent vintage, self-consciously styled as a third way between dispensationalism and covenant theology. While based upon earlier antecedents, such as New Covenant theology, the approach originates in the 2012 publication of *Kingdom through Covenant* by two Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professors, Stephen Wellum and Peter Gentry.¹⁷ Its proponents hail primarily, although not exclusively, from this circle.

Two key tenets capture the essence of progressive covenantalism. First, progressive covenantalism argues that the now-inaugurated new covenant has fulfilled and consummated the previous biblical covenants (e.g., Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic). Gentry and Wellum explain this progression: “Since *all* the biblical covenants are part of the one plan of God and since no covenant is unrelated to what preceded it and since no covenant can be understood apart from Christ, it is right to say that *all* the biblical covenants reach their telos in Christ and the new covenant.”¹⁸ Second, progressive covenantalism argues that Christ, as the mediator of the new covenant and the goal of OT prophecy, is the true and consummative Israel and thus the beneficiary and arbiter of all OT promises directed to the nation Israel.¹⁹ With respect to hermeneutics, progressive covenantalism correlates biblical texts through a redemptive lens to Christ by privileging the hermeneutical priority of the NT to expand or transform the intention and meaning of the OT.²⁰

With respect to the NT’s use of the OT, two interpretive issues may be identified as exemplary of this approach: (1) the method of discerning Christ pervasively in the OT, especially as this relates to typology, and (2) the hermeneutics of progressive revelation with regard to testament priority. First, as to discerning Christ in the OT, progressive covenantalism proves rather challenging to define insofar as its proponents occupy an interpretive spectrum with varying degrees of Christocentric impulse. Progressive covenantalist Jason DeRouchie finds himself closer to Chris-

¹⁶ See especially, Stephen J. Wellum and Peter J. Gentry, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018); Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker, eds., *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016); David Schrock, “What Designates a Valid Type? A Christotelic, Covenantal Proposal,” *Southeastern Theological Review* 5.1 (2014): 3–26.

¹⁷ See Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker, “Introduction,” in *Progressive Covenantalism*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 2–3. An antecedent may also be found in Russell D. Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), esp. 117–19.

¹⁸ Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 660. Cf. Jason S. DeRouchie, “Father of a Multitude of Nations: New Covenant Ecclesiology in OT Perspective,” in *Progressive Covenantalism*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 14–15.

¹⁹ Brent E. Parker, “The Israel-Christ-Church Relationship,” in *Progressive Covenantalism*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 57–63.

²⁰ Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017), 431–32. Douglas Green summarizes Christotelic interpretation: “Christian interpretation of the Old Testament is ultimately an act of re-reading or reinterpreting that section of the Bible through the lens of what God has done in Christ.” “Seeing Too Much Jesus in the Bible,” *Christianity Today* 58 (Sept 2014): 23.

tocentrism than to Christotelism.²¹ Others embrace the label *Christotelic* or use the terms *Christocentric* and *Christotelic* interchangeably.²² Brent Parker appears to speak for the movement when he concludes that every institution, identity marker, office, and key event connected to Israel points forward typically to Christ.²³ Christ is the center of OT history and the fulfillment of all OT promises in a way that consummates and exhausts OT Scripture.²⁴

Second, progressive covenantalism appears to employ a still-developing hermeneutic with respect to progressive revelation and testament priority. This inchoate interpretive lens is manifest in the question of how to correlate later Scripture with earlier Scripture or, expressed another way, of whether the Bible should be read forward or backward. Daniel Block, a self-styled Christotelic interpreter, argues that Scripture must be read *forward*: “Rather than reading the Scriptures backwards I read them forwards, interpreting Isaiah in the light of Moses, and Luke and Paul in the light of Moses and Isaiah. If tensions between earlier and later pronouncements arise, I may not force the former to mean what later authors used them for rhetorically, but I must inquire regarding the context of their work how later biblical authors can do with earlier texts what they appear to be doing.”²⁵ In response, Thomas Schreiner contends that while it is true that the Scriptures are to be read forwards, the governing impetus for Christians is to read them *backwards*: “It will not do . . . only to read the story from front to back. We must also read the story from back to front. Here the notion that the book has one divine author surfaces again. Yes, we must read the Bible covenantally, as an unfolding story, but we understand the story better when we read the whole story.”²⁶ Thus, he concludes, the Christian interpreter understands Psalm 110 better than David did when he

²¹ Jason DeRouchie, “Lifting the Veil: Reading and Preaching Jesus’ Bible through Christ and for Christ,” *SBJT* 22.3 (2018): 159, 177. G. K. Beale, on the other hand, while not a progressive covenantalist, commends the Christotelism of Enns as superior to Christocentrism: “I like this term ‘christotelic’ better than ‘christocentric,’ since it refers more explicitly to approaching Old Testament texts not attempting to read Christ into every passage (which some wrongly construe to be a christocentric reading), but to understand that the goal of the whole Old Testament is to point to the eschatological coming of Christ.” G. K. Beale, “Did Jesus and the Apostles Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Revisiting the Debate Seventeen Years Later in the Light of Peter Enns’ Book *Inspiration and Incarnation*,” *Them* 32 (2006): 19; cf. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 86. Yet elsewhere Beale concludes that Luke 24:27 teaches that Christ is to be found in “every portion of OT Scripture, including every verse.” G. K. Beale, “Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Review of Elliott Johnson and Vern Poythress,” *SBJT* 22.3 (2018): 90.

²² Schrock, “What Designates a Valid Type?,” 3–26; Dan Lioy, *Facets of Pauline Discourse in Christocentric and Christotelic Perspective*, *StBibLit* 166 (New York: Peter Lang, 2016), 5; Russell L. Meek, “With Christ on the Road to Emmaus,” *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 14.1 (2017): 3, 8; Wellum, “From Alpha to Omega,” 75, 82.

²³ Parker, “The Israel-Christ-Church Relationship,” 44–45.

²⁴ DeRouchie, “Father of a Multitude of Nations,” 29.

²⁵ Block, “Christotelic Preaching,” 15–16.

²⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, “Preaching Christ from the Old Testament and from Genesis 15:1–6,” *SBJT* 22.3 (2018): 73.

wrote it. NT priority trumps diachronic, progressive revelation in the interpretation of OT texts.²⁷

III. SHORTCOMINGS IN THESE APPROACHES

In assessing both intertextuality and Christotelism, several challenges may be offered. First, both approaches tend to diminish the role of authorial intent in determining meaning. Intertextuality does so by eclipsing the role of the author to such an extent that he or she no longer is recognizable. Christotelism tends to do so by positing that the OT human authors were unaware of the latent meaning of the texts they composed with respect to the coming Messiah.²⁸ Such a move leads often to the marginalization of the human authors or to an emphasis upon the divine author in such a way that inadvertently drives a wedge into the unitive divine-human authorial intent.²⁹ Second, both approaches tend to privilege chronologically later texts in the interpretation of earlier texts. Intertextuality does this by allowing synchronic concerns in interpretation to overtake diachronic concerns so that texts have no definable boundaries. Christotelism does so by allowing NT interpretive lines to expand or redefine the historical and literary meaning of OT texts, principally through the use of typology. This interpretive tack diminishes the value of OT Scripture as Scripture by imposing a backward Christological lens as the hermeneutical key.³⁰ Third, both approaches tend to allow the reader a role in determining the meaning of texts. Intertextuality does this overtly by rescinding the role of the author so that the reader becomes supreme in determining the meaning of texts. Christotelism does this more subtly. Claiming NT precedent for the Christological reading of OT texts allows Christotelic interpreters to creatively find patterns and figures in the OT and to repurpose them in ways that move beyond the OT context.³¹ Insofar as Christian readers share the eschatological/Christotelic hermeneu-

²⁷ Oren Martin, "The Land Promise Biblically and Theologically Understood," in *Progressive Covenantalism*, ed. Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 269–71.

²⁸ G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? An Examination of the Presuppositions of Jesus' and the Apostles' Exegetical Method," *Them* 14.3 (1989): 91.

²⁹ See Nathan Hoff, "Meaning-Types and Text-Tokens: An Examination of the Relationship between the Biblical Text and Its Meaning," in *The Theory and Practice of Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. H. Wayne House and Forrest Weiland (Silverton, OR: Lampion, 2015), 12–21; Kevin S. Chen, *The Messianic Vision of the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019), 10–23.

³⁰ Hans W. Wolff states the matter succinctly: "The proposition that the Old Testament can be properly understood only in the light of the New ... stands in need of its converse: The New Testament Christ-event can be fully understood only in the light of the Old Testament.... No New Testament writer felt he was in a position to witness to Jesus Christ without constantly opening and quoting the Old Testament." Hans W. Wolff, "The Hermeneutics of the Old Testament," trans. Keith Crim, in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics*, ed. Claus Westermann (Atlanta: John Knox, 1963), 187–88.

³¹ For example, Parker argues that "all the institutions (the sacrificial system, tabernacle, temple, Sabbath, feasts, the law), identity markers (e.g., circumcision), offices (prophet, priest, king), and key events (e.g., the exodus) of Israel find their culmination in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ" ("The Israel-Christ-Church Relationship," 44–45). Such a statement invites a hermeneutical "Where's Waldo" approach to the OT in which the interpreter discerns Christ in nearly every aspect of

tic of NT writers, they, like the NT apostles, are encouraged to adopt an interpretive mindset toward the OT in which Christ is discerned as pervasively present in the text.³²

IV. LEXICAL PRIMING

The rise and popularity of intertextuality and Christotelism in biblical interpretation calls for a fresh assessment of the variety of ways the NT uses the OT. This essay moves beyond the proposals of Moo and Beale to focus on the neglected angle of rhetorical convention in the use of earlier texts. Understanding the rhetorical use of texts provides a venue for assessing how later writers incorporate earlier texts without necessarily expanding or altering the original meaning. The field of corpus linguistics, with its emphasis on formulaic language, and the subsidiary field of lexical priming, with its study of pre-configured phrases, offer another method for assessing difficult texts in NT interpretation. These disciplines analyze the “priming” of earlier discourses for later discourses, analogous to the practice of mimesis, in which ancient rhetors and writers interspersed well-known or classical phrases in their discourses.³³ I propose that the biblical authors occasionally used antecedent Scripture to similar ends, for rhetorical purposes rather than from an intention to alter the meaning or from a careless neglect of the original context.³⁴ I begin by outlining the field of corpus linguistics and its contributions to the study of discourse. These insights will be applied to a handful of texts from the Gospel of Matthew, a touchstone for the use of the OT in the NT, under the rubric of *canonical priming*.³⁵

1. *Corpus linguistics*. The linguist J. R. Firth is considered the pioneer of corpus linguistics.³⁶ Firth stressed the importance of context in determining semantic meaning.³⁷ He suggests that these connections jointly create a network of meaning for a term, recognized intuitively by fluent speakers. No word is known in isolation but from its customary linguistic connections in the speaker’s cultural encyclopedia. These contextual alignments create what Sinclair later calls the “idiom principle,” in which a language user has at her disposal “semi-preconstructed phrases” that con-

the life of ancient Israel. While Parker is not here explicitly claiming a role for the interpreter in determining meaning, the hermeneutical trajectory for doing so is established.

³² Enns, “Fuller Meaning, Single Goal,” 217.

³³ Dennis R. MacDonald, “Introduction,” in *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity*, ed. Dennis MacDonald (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 1.

³⁴ *Contra* Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 138–42.

³⁵ On the significance of Matthew with respect to the NT use of the OT, see R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989), 166–67; Robert H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel: With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope*, NovTSup 18 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 1–5.

³⁶ J. R. Firth, *Papers in Linguistics, 1934–1951* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 7–33.

³⁷ Firth proposes three categories of usage: (1) *semantic collocation*: configured words often appear together; (2) *semantic colligation*: configured words often form prefabricated syntactical constructions; and (3) *semantic association* or *prosody*: configured words go together “naturally” while other words do not. See Michael Pace-Siggs, *Lexical Priming in Spoken English Usage* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 9–11; John Sinclair, *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3.

stitute a single, not multiple, linguistic choice.³⁸ Thus, for example, in English the direct object *fire* occurs after the verb *set* or *light* (rather than *place* or *burn*), terms like *work* and *evidence* attract the adjective *hard* (but not the antonym *soft*), and the verb *happen* is mostly associated with unpleasant events. A word is to be defined *not* solely from its etymology or contemporary use, but from the repertoire of its collocations with other words and phrases that constitute collectively its “units of meaning.”³⁹

Alison Wray hones these analyses in her exploration of “formulaic language.”⁴⁰ Formulaic language, according to Wray, consists of preset lexical patterns.⁴¹ She argues that although a fluent speaker carries the capacity for generative grammar, this is not the customary or preferred mechanism for language use.⁴² Rather, “formulaicity” is pervasive.⁴³ Several factors motivate such prefabricated frameworks, including the reduction of the speaker’s and listener’s processing effort, the signaling of the speaker’s “in-groupness” or fluency, the persuasion of the listener, and the organization of the discourse.⁴⁴ These frameworks serve an overarching, perlocutionary goal: to promote the speaker’s interests through the skillful use of culturally-recognized rhetorical convention.⁴⁵

Walter Ong argues likewise that these formulaic language patterns were vital in ancient, non-typographic contexts where “fixed, formulaic thought patterns were essential for wisdom and effective administration.”⁴⁶ To retain and retrieve precise formulations required memorable linguistic patterns such as rhythmic and balanced repetitions or antitheses; alliterations and assonances; communally-fixed appellations; and standard, formulaic expressions.⁴⁷ In such an economy “mnemonic serviceability is a *sine qua non*.”⁴⁸

2. *Lexical priming*. Michael Hoey identifies these discourse patterns as *lexical priming*.⁴⁹ He explains lexical priming as the subconscious, accruing record of the context and co-text of a given word or phrase. This lexical record, imprinted on the memory of language users, influences speakers toward preset linguistic construc-

³⁸ Sinclair, *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation*, 109. On this phenomenon in spoken discourse, see Ronald Carter, *Language and Creativity: The Art of Common Talk* (London: Routledge, 2004).

³⁹ John Sinclair, *Trust the Text: Language, Corpus, and Discourse* (London: Routledge, 2004), 39.

⁴⁰ Alison Wray, *Formulaic Language and the Lexicon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.

⁴¹ Wray defines these lexical patterns as “a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar” (9).

⁴² Wray, 10.

⁴³ Wray, 13.

⁴⁴ Wray, 16, 93.

⁴⁵ Wray, 101.

⁴⁶ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, 30th anniversary ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002), 25.

⁴⁷ Ong, 34.

⁴⁸ Ong, 69.

⁴⁹ Michael Hoey, *Patterns of Lexis in Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3; Hoey, *Lexical Priming: A New Theory of Words and Language* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 8–12; Hoey, “Lexical Priming and Literary Creativity,” in *Text, Discourse, and Corpora: Theory and Analysis*, ed. Michael Hoey et al. (New York: Continuum, 2007), 7–8; Pace-Siggs, *Lexical Priming in Spoken English Usage*, 1–3.

tions.⁵⁰ Every speaker has a “mental concordance” of each word encountered, a matrix “glossed for social, physical, discursal, generic, and interpersonal context.”⁵¹ These fixed word patterns govern language mapping in oral and written discourse.⁵² This generated semantic constellating drives language use and structure and serves as a primary factor in discerning the meaning of words.⁵³

3. *The Old Testament as “canonical primer.”* These fields offer a refined understanding for scriptural discourse. In a manuscript culture that is highly oral, the mnemonic patterning of speech suggests that formulaic, primed phrases shaped the thinking and writing of biblical authors.⁵⁴ David Carr has laid the groundwork for these correlations in his study of education and scribal training in the ancient Near East.⁵⁵ Scribes, the literate elite of the culture, trained initiates through a process of oral-written education. The memorization and recitation of biblical texts served in the case of ancient Israel as an “indigenous curriculum,”⁵⁶ and cognitive discipline and retention were crucial to formation and professional proficiency. I propose that the canon of Scripture provided an authoritative linguistic map or “canonical primer” for biblical writers. Later authors’ use of earlier texts often followed the conventions of ancient rhetoric with several goals: to boost authority and credibility, to organize units of discourse, and to persuade readers toward certain conceptions or behaviors. Although some biblical scholars have hesitated to recognize proposed intertextual links⁵⁷ or have employed at times tortuous logic to absolve NT writers from allegations of violating context,⁵⁸ the rubric of “canonical priming” provides another external reference point for charting literary connections. The category strengthens the link between written texts and the role of memory and oral/aural associations.⁵⁹

V. CANONICALLY PRIMED NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS

The following selected Matthean texts, debated by interpreters, serve as possible examples of canonical priming by means of discourse-generated, formulaic language from the OT that provided a linguistic map for the rhetorical conventions

⁵⁰ Hoey, “Lexical Priming and Literary Creativity,” 7–8.

⁵¹ Hoey, *Lexical Priming*, 11.

⁵² Hoey proposes seven categories of association (“Lexical Priming and Literary Creativity,” 8).

⁵³ Hoey, *Patterns of Lexis in Text*, 188.

⁵⁴ Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 117.

⁵⁵ David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3–14.

⁵⁶ Carr, 156.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Porter, “Allusions and Echoes,” 29–41; Michael V. Fox, “Review of *Like Grapes of Gold Set in Silver: An Interpretation of Proverbial Clusters in Proverbs 10:1–22:16*, by Knut M. Heim,” *HS* 44 (2003): 267–72.

⁵⁸ Walter C. Kaiser, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 47–56.

⁵⁹ Cynthia Edelburg has examined this nexus in her discussion of sound, memory, and other cognitive processes for creating and discerning literary connections. Cynthia Edelburg, “Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Question of Readership: Some Preliminary Observations,” *JSOT* 35 (2010): 145.

of the NT writer. Each of these citations that Matthew employs carries rhythmic cadence and assonance to facilitate mnemonic mastery.⁶⁰

1. *Jeremiah 31:15 in Matthew 2:17–18*. Matthew cites the lament of Jeremiah 31:15 (LXX Jer 38:15) to characterize Herod's slaughter of the infants: "Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more'" (Matt 2:17–18, NRSV). Interpreters often see here a form of typology, as the text in Jeremiah is not a prediction and does not use the *yiqtol* conjugation to signify a future occurrence.⁶¹ Others decry the citation as the "most striking case of disregard" in the NT for the original OT context.⁶²

Although Matthew uses fulfillment language, several factors hint at canonical priming.⁶³ First, the use of quotations in 1:18–2:23 serves as the structural key to organize the five sketches covering the infancy of Jesus. These sketches are arranged in the form of three literary chiasms (1:18–25; 2:1–12; 2:13–23) that develop the key themes of the genealogy (1:1–17).⁶⁴ Each chiasm turns upon an OT citation, most designated as "fulfilled" (*πληρώω*) in an aspect of Jesus's childhood (1:22–23; 2:5b–6; 2:17–18), with the quotations providing the structural framework for the sections.⁶⁵ The final chiasm includes three citation formulas, each coming at the end of a sketch (2:15, 17–18, 23), with 2:17–18 constituting the pivot. This concatenation of quotations suggests the employment of mimesis in citing prophets from the OT for rhetorical effect. Matthew places emphasis on the quotation of Jeremiah in 2:17–18 as the culminating pivot of the chiasmic structure in order to demon-

⁶⁰ For example, in the Matt 2:18 citation each clause, save the final one, consists of a cadenced sequence of eight to ten syllables with repetition of the *κ* sound in the words *ἀκούω*, *κλαυθμός*, *καί*, *Ῥαχὴλ*, *κλαίω*, and *παρακαλέω*. The Matt 3:17 citation consists of ten words rhythmically phrased in an alternating stress pattern. The Matt 27:9–10 quotation repeats the *τ* sound in the words *τρίακοντα*, *τιμή*, *τιμῶν* (2*x*), and *συντάσσω*, as well as the *α* in *ἀργύριον* and *ἀγρός*. These factors suggest literary devices to aid memory.

⁶¹ Craig Blomberg, "Matthew," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 10; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 34–35.

⁶² S. L. Edgar, "Respect for Context in Quotations from the Old Testament," *NTS* 9.1 (1962): 58. Cf. Richard T. Mead, "A Dissenting Opinion about Respect for Context in Old Testament Quotations," *NTS* 10.2 (1964): 281.

⁶³ The nature of Matthew's fulfillment language is a vast topic. I side here in the main with France's conclusion that *πληρώω* in Matthew regularly connotes the realization of the full potential of a historical pattern in the life and work of the Messiah rather than serving merely as the climactic closure of predictive prophecy (*Matthew*, 183–86; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 12). France concludes that while such exegetical techniques may prove embarrassing to modern interpreters, they were marks in the ancient context of a sophisticated and lengthy engagement with OT Scripture (*Gospel of Matthew*, 45).

⁶⁴ Vincent A. Pizzuto, "The Structural Elegance of Matthew 1–2: A Chiasmic Proposal," *CBQ* 74.4 (2012): 712–37. Pizzuto's third chiasm contains three of the five sketches, with the other two chiasms containing one sketch each.

⁶⁵ France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 40–45; Pizzuto, "Structural Elegance of Matthew 1–2," 718–21.

strate that the tragic history of affliction for the nation Israel is reprised in the life and person of Jesus.⁶⁶

Second, elements in the Jeremiah text hint that the prophet himself may have been employing a well-known refrain. Lindars points out that Ramah is an unexpected place for Rachel to be weeping over the loss of her people.⁶⁷ Although one tradition identifies her own burial place as nearby, nowhere in Scripture does she weep for her family. More likely, her mourning serves as a metaphor for the decimation of the population of Ephraim (Ramah borders Ephraim) during the deportation by the Assyrians in 723 BC. The appeal to Rachel, the mother of Joseph, was particularly apt since the leading northern tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim descended from her. Her symbolic grief rises in antiphony with that of Jacob over the loss of Joseph (Gen 37:34). As Ramah lay on the road which the exiles would take and was also a gathering point for the exiles sent from Judah in 587 BC (Jer 40:1), the prophet may have adopted the refrain to express a like sense of despair at their removal to Babylon. The weeping of Rachel, as a mother for the nation (Ruth 4:11), symbolizes the grief of the entire nation.⁶⁸ This conclusion finds support in the structure of Jeremiah 31:15–22, where the rhythmic poem concerning Rachel’s weeping (v. 15) is set off from the reply, constituting the oracle proper, by the repetition of “thus says the LORD” (v. 16) (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה). Jeremiah’s repurposing of a traditional refrain to express his grief signals a “priming” that precedes Matthew.

Third, Matthew cites Jeremiah in a way that corresponds to Jeremiah’s own use of “fulfillment” language to signal completion. The citation hence offers a clue that Jeremiah has primed this refrain in an eschatological fashion for Matthew. LXX Jeremiah uses the term πληρώω three times to denote the idea of completion or conclusion, and Jeremiah is the only prophet in the LXX to use the term this way. In Jeremiah 25:8–14, YHWH promises that he will judge Judah for her disobedience and decimate the land so that it becomes a “desolate wasteland” for seventy years. But “when seventy years *are completed*” (NETS) (ἐν τῷ πληρωθῆναι τὰ ἑβδομήκοντα ἔτη), YHWH will turn to punish the king of Babylon and his nation (25:12). Similarly, in LXX Jeremiah 36:10 (=MT 29:10), YHWH promises to restore Israel to the land “when Babylon’s seventy years are about *to be completed*” (NETS) (ὅταν μέλλῃ πληροῦσθαι Βαβυλῶνι ἑβδομήκοντα ἔτη). Finally, YHWH invokes the sabbatical-year legislation to remind Jeremiah’s audience that Israel was required—but failed—to liberate fellow Hebrew slaves each cycle “when six years *are complete*” (NETS) (ὅταν πληρωθῆ ἕξ ἔτη) (Jer 41:14). In each example πληρώω denotes the completion or conclusion of a designated period of time. In citing Jeremiah, Matthew appears to emphasize this notion of completed duration (cf. Dan 9:2) to stress that Jesus brings to culmination or conclusion a key aspect of Israel’s history—weeping over the ongoing decimation of her children—as portrayed in

⁶⁶ Pizzuto, “Structural Elegance of Matthew 1–2,” 733.

⁶⁷ Barnabas Lindars, “Rachel Weeping for Her Children”—Jeremiah 31:15–22,” *JOT* 4 (1979): 52–53; cf. J. A. Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 573.

⁶⁸ Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 100.

the exilic prophet, Jeremiah. Israel's ancient weeping over the loss of progeny is thus repurposed as anticipatory of the messianic child whom God delivers.

Fourth, Matthew 2:17 uses a unique fulfillment formula ("then was fulfilled"; cf. Matt 27:9) emphasizing the timing and evil human agency of the event rather than its climactic closure of predictive prophecy (elsewhere as "this was to fulfill").⁶⁹ If, as suggested by some, Matthew restricts his formula-quotations to citations from the prophets, his use of this formulaic text signifies messianic realization in the coming of Jesus.⁷⁰

2. *Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1 in Matthew 3:17*. At the baptism of Jesus, "a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased'" (Matt 3:17, NRSV). Many see here an OT allusion, although various sources have been suggested, including LXX Jeremiah 38:20 (=MT 31:20);⁷¹ Exod 4:23;⁷² and Ps 2:7.⁷³ A conflation with Isaiah 42:1 ("Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights") is also held.⁷⁴ Both texts were understood in at least parts of pre-Christian Judaism as messianic (cf. 4Q174 1 I, 10–14 with Tg. Isa. 42:1).⁷⁵

In that the citation discussed already in Matthew 2:17–18 derives from LXX Jeremiah 38:15, the presence here of a possible allusion to LXX Jeremiah 38:20 increases the likelihood that this backdrop of the "rejected prophet" served as a fertile source for Matthew's Christological fulfillment motif.⁷⁶ Jeremiah remains on the horizon of Matthew's Gospel in a powerful way as a dynamic precursor to the life and ministry of Jesus.⁷⁷ Jeremiah served as one of the foremost historical persons to whom Jesus's contemporaries compared him (Matt 16:14). The writer of Matthew alludes to key parts of Jeremiah and draws upon his memory of Jeremiah to frame the corresponding Jewish rejection and persecution of Jesus.⁷⁸ Each of the three texts (Matt 2:17–18; 3:17; 27:9) here suggested as sources for Matthean citation through canonical priming bear some relationship to the prophet Jeremiah. Given the circulation of these particular texts in Matthew 3:17 from Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 42:1, and LXX Jeremiah 38:20 and their rhythmic formulation, these phrases

⁶⁹ Wim J. C. Weren, *Studies in Matthew's Gospel: Literary Design, Intertextuality, and Social Setting*, BibInt 130 (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 44.

⁷⁰ R. T. France, "Herod and the Children of Bethlehem," *NovT* 21.2 (1979): 108.

⁷¹ Jeffrey A. Gibbs, "Israel Standing with Israel: The Baptism of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 3:13–17)," *CBQ* 64.3 (2002): 511–12.

⁷² W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, ICC, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 1:328; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 157.

⁷³ Craig Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 135.

⁷⁴ See the discussion in Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:336–38; Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 53–55; Gibbs, "Israel Standing with Israel," 523–25.

⁷⁵ Blomberg, "Matthew," 14.

⁷⁶ Gibbs points to a total of four possible Matthean allusions to LXX Jeremiah 38: (1) LXX Jer 38:15 in Matt 2:18; (2) LXX Jer 38:20 in Matt 3:17; (3) LXX Jer 38:34 in Matt 23:8; and (4) LXX Jer 38:31 in Matt 26:26 ("Israel Standing with Israel," 516).

⁷⁷ Walter Brueggemann, *The Theology of the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 188–90.

⁷⁸ Mark F. Whitters, "Jesus in the Footsteps of Jeremiah," *CBQ* 68.2 (2006): 230–32.

perhaps also circulated more widely in the Second Temple era as canonically primed messianic formulations centering on the roles of son and servant. Matthew adopts the formulas here for rhetorical purposes to emphasize the inception of Jesus's public ministry as fraught with messianic expectation.

3. *Zechariah 11:12–13 and Jeremiah 32:6–9 in Matthew 27:9–10*. In recounting the aftermath of Judas's death, Matthew 27:9–10 has been classified as “the strangest fulfillment quotation” in Matthew:⁷⁹ “Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, ‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me’” (Matt 27:9–10, NRSV). The closest verbal parallels are Zechariah 11:12–13, which refers to the thirty pieces of silver the prophet throws down in the temple for the potter; Jeremiah 18:1–2, which describes YHWH's revelation to Jeremiah at the potter's house; and Jeremiah 32:6–9, which describes Jeremiah's purchase of a field in Anathoth.⁸⁰ Matthew's citation follows the rabbinical practice of conflating texts and identifying their source by the most obscure reference.⁸¹ Interpreters often view Matthew's citation as an example of typological fulfillment.⁸² Several factors suggest that Matthew employs formulaic language primed canonically by sundry texts from the prophets.

First, Matthew's language is rhythmic and poetical, while the prophecies in Zechariah and Jeremiah are narrative prose. This suggests that Matthew is reworking formulaic phrasing to achieve cadenced lines rather than aiming at precise citation. His purpose is to establish the divine authority behind even the treachery of Judas to persuade readers of the messianic implications of Jesus's trial and death. The betrayal and death of Jesus are to be read in the light of Jeremiah's tragic prophetic ministry. Second, the fulfillment formula is similar to Matthew 2:17–18, which emphasizes the timing and evil human agency rather than the closure of predictive prophecy (“*then* was fulfilled” [τότε ἐπληρώθη]). Third, Matthew adapts the citation to tie in rhetorically to the theme of “innocent blood” so as to underscore the pollution of the land and the ransom aspect of Jesus's death.⁸³ Matthew uses “blood” (αἷμα) three times in the preceding verses (27:4, 6, 8), and the theme is highlighted by the threefold repetition in verse 9 of “price” terminology (τιμή and τιμάω). These factors suggest a formulaic use of the Hebrew Bible in this case for rhetorical purposes.

⁷⁹ Blomberg, “Matthew,” 95.

⁸⁰ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:569. Gundry suggests a closer affinity to Jeremiah 19:1–13, in which Jeremiah shatters a potter's vessel to foretell the demise of Jerusalem (*The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, 124–25). Catherine S. Hamilton likewise argues for this connection (“The Death of Judas in Matthew: Matthew 27:9 Reconsidered,” *JBL* 137.2 [2018]: 423–25).

⁸¹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 3:569.

⁸² Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 58; Blomberg, “Matthew,” 96.

⁸³ Catherine S. Hamilton, *The Death of Jesus in Matthew: Innocent Blood and the End of the Exile*, SNTSMS 167 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 188–89.

VI. CONCLUSION

In this essay I have argued that the rhetorical use of citations and allusions is an overlooked category in studies assessing the NT use of the OT. Often the approaches of intertextuality or Christotelism are adopted to argue that the NT alters, transforms, or repurposes the intention and scope of OT texts. Providing a potential check on these approaches, however, the fields of corpus linguistics and lexical priming offer a matrix for evaluating how earlier formulaic language patterns influence later language formulation. In biblical studies some examples of NT citations or allusions find better categorization as the rhetorical use of canonically primed, authoritative texts from the OT. In these cases, the NT author is likely more concerned for the authoritative and persuasive effect these texts provide his audience than for unpacking the original context or for indicating the direct fulfillment of predictive prophecy or the indirect fulfillment of typology. For the writer of the Gospel of Matthew the rejected prophet Jeremiah serves as a fertile source for rhetorically framing the suffering life and ministry of King Jesus as the completion of the earlier historical pattern. The canonical priming method of assessing other NT texts with clear literary connections to the OT may prove a fruitful venue for defining more carefully the complex interrelations between the testaments.