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

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Seventeen years ago, I wrote an article in Themelios titled ‘Did Jesus and the Apostles Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?’, which was partly in response to Richard Longenecker’s work on the use of the Old Testament in the New. Much has happened since then in this field, especially among evangelical scholarship. The appearance of the recent book by Westminster Seminary professor, Peter Enns, Inspiration and Incarnation, represents a similar position to that of Longenecker, yet


in some significant ways goes beyond it. For this reason, I have thought it fitting to readdress the issue of my 1989 Themelios article in the light of Enns’ recent work. While the majority of Enns’ book concerns a discussion of evangelicals’ views of the Old Testament and evaluation of these views, his fourth chapter is about the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, which is lengthy (over fifty pages) and based partly on an earlier article. Enns has written a stimulating and thought-provoking chapter, one that will cause Christians to think long and hard about what are their own views on this important issue. The purpose of this essay is to summarize Enns’ view in the fourth chapter of his book and to evaluate it.

One of Enns’ main points in this section is his emphasis on interpreting the Old Testament according to a ‘christotelic’ hermeneutic, an approach of the apostles that he believes the contemporary church should follow. 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. I think Enns has made a very helpful improvement on how we should refer to a Christian approach to the Old Testament. I also think that his stress on reading the Old Testament from the eschatological perspective of the New Testament age is crucial and absolutely correct. Though I am in general agreement with his approach, the way Enns often defines a ‘christotelic’ reading is not, in my view, as felicitous, nor are several other significant points that he makes about how the New Testament uses the Old Testament.

This essay is organized primarily around six issues pertaining to Enns’ perspective on the relation of the Old Testament to the New.

Six Issues of Concern About Enns’ View of the New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament

First: Enns contends that there are ‘odd uses’ of the Old Testament in the New Testament for modern readers and that such uses occur ‘often’ in the New Testament (114; so also 115-16, 152 [‘time and time again the New Testament authors do some odd things, by our standards, with the Old Testament’]). On the other hand, Enns appears to acknowledge that there

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is some ‘grammatical-historical’ exegesis by the apostles (e.g., 158). Other New Testament scholars have found that these so-called ‘odd uses’ can viably be understood also as ‘grammatical-historical’ exegesis. But why does Enns not acknowledge these other plausible interpretations, especially since they are not given by fundamentalists but active New Testament scholars who are publishing in the field of the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, some of whom also do not affirm inerrancy? Neither does he acknowledge these other interpretative possibilities in his Westminster Theological Journal article on which this chapter is based. This is misleading in that he does not give the reader (whether layperson or scholar) an opportunity to judge Enns’ interpretation of these purported ‘odd uses’ in the light of other competing interpretations.

In addition, Enns proposes that New Testament writers either use a ‘grammatical-historical’ exegetical method or they use a ‘christotelic’ approach (e.g., 158-60), the latter of which Enns says is usually not related contextually to the original intention of the Old Testament author (156-60). In this respect, he says that ‘final coherence’ of meaning in Christ is often not consistent with the original meaning of the Old Testament human author (160). He says that:

...to read the Old Testament ‘christotelically’ is to read it already knowing that Christ is somehow the end to which the Old Testament story is heading (154) ...

It is the Old Testament as a whole, particularly in its grand themes, that finds its telos, its completion, in Christ ... What constitutes a Christian reading of the Old Testament is that it proceeds to the second reading, the eschatological, christotelic reading – and this is precisely what the apostles model for us (154).

One who disagrees with Enns’ thesis can agree with his definition of a ‘christotelic’ reading just quoted, but not necessarily with his contention that such a reading means that ‘New Testament authors were not engaging the Old Testament in an effort to remain consistent with the

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4 On p. 153 he explicitly says ‘that apostolic hermeneutics violates what is considered to be a fundamental interpretive principle: don’t take things out of context’.
original context and intention of the Old Testament author’ (115).

But are there other interpretative methods, besides those mentioned by Enns, to keep in mind that can show significant degrees of consistency with Old Testament contexts? Other good scholars would say that there are other viable interpretative approaches along the spectrum between these two opposite poles of ‘grammatical–historical exegesis’ and ‘non–contextual exegesis’. For example, the New Testament authors may be using a biblical–theological approach that could be described as a canonical contextual approach. This approach is not a technical grammatical–historical one but takes in wider biblical contexts than merely the one being quoted, yet is not inconsistent with the quoted context. Were not the apostolic writers theologians, and can we not allow that they did not always interpret the Old Testament according to a grammatical–historical exegetical method, but theologically in ways that creatively developed Old Testament texts, yet did not contravene the meaning of the original Old Testament author? Or, could New Testament writers be permitted the liberty to use a ‘typological approach’, whereby historical events come to be seen as foreshadowings of events in New Testament times? Some think this is not a viable approach, while others do, the latter of whom see that underlying the approach was a philosophy of history whereby God designed earlier events to point to later events (e.g., the death of the Passover lamb was an event foreshadowing and fulfilled in Christ’s death [John 19:36]). The later use grows out of the earlier narrated event and, thus, is organically or contextually related to it and its meaning; while being a progressive revelatory development of the Old Testament text, it is not inconsistent with the original context.

When one considers all these different approaches, what the New Testament writers do with the Old Testament does not seem so ‘odd’. In fact, in his discussion of the use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15, after Enns says that this does not reflect ‘grammatical–historical exegesis’, he then proposes what I would call a quite viable biblical–theological approach.

5 For examples of this, see G.K. Beale, The Temple and the Church’s Mission (NSBT; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), passim.
Right Doctrine from Wrong Texts?

This is employed by Matthew in his use of Hosea 11:1 and is not inconsistent with the original intention of the Hosea verse and which is understandable to both ancient and modern readers. Accordingly, Enns proposes that:

Matthew’s use of Hosea reflects broader theological convictions. Although neither I nor anyone else can step into Matthew’s head and outline precisely how he understood Hosea, the following suggestion is quite reasonable. It may be that Matthew had in mind not simply this one verse in Hosea 11, but the larger context of that chapter. There were no verse numbers in Matthew’s day. Quoting one verse may have been a way of saying that part of Hosea that begins with ‘out of Egypt I called my son’.

If this is true (and although this is not merely a private opinion, it is conjectural nonetheless), we may be able to trace some of Matthew’s broader theological underpinnings. The son in Hosea and the son in Matthew are a study in contrasts. Israel came out of Egypt, was disobedient, deserved punishment, yet was forgiven by God (Hos. 11:8–11). Christ came out of Egypt, led a life of perfect obedience, deserved no punishment, but was crucified – the guiltless for the guilty. By presenting Jesus this way, Matthew was able to mount an argument for his readers that Jesus fulfilled the ideal that Israel was supposed to have reached but never did. Jesus is the true Israel.

Again, this is just one way of putting together Matthew’s theological logic, and it is certainly up for debate. What is certain, however, is that Matthew’s use of Hosea most definitely had an internal logic that was meaningful to his readers. Our obligation is to try to understand Matthew as he would have been understood by his original audience, not as we would like to understand him (134).

I would rather say, this ‘internal logic’ suggested by Enns also is quite understandable to modern readers, as a viable biblical–theological reading that is consistent with the original contextual understanding of Hosea 11. Thus, I like this proposal by Enns. This shows that, whether Enns realizes it
or not, in reality he is showing another interpretative approach besides grammatical–historical or non–contextual christotelic that New Testament writers could employ and which is not inconsistent with the original Old Testament context. One wonders what Enns’ conclusions might be if he tried more to explore other kinds of approaches like this one before making final overall conclusions about how the New uses the Old Testament.

Second: Enns’ list of ‘strange’ uses are not that many: indeed, he lists only eight such uses (114-42): Exodus 3:6 in Luke 20:27-40; Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15; Isaiah 49:8 in 2 Corinthians 6:2; Abraham’s seed in Galatians 3:16, 29; Isaiah 59:20 in Romans 11:26-27; Psalm 95:9-10 in Hebrews 3:7-11. Yet he claims that these unusual uses are ‘such a very common dimension of the New Testament’ (116). He needs to list many more texts in order to support this claim, and he needs to give representative surveys of the various interpretations of each passage in order to show the varying interpretations of these passages and whether or not some of these interpretations contest the oddity.  

The reader is left to trust Enns’ word for it. In contrast to Enns’ assessment, there is significant past scholarship and a large scale work about to be published, which argue that the dominant approach of New Testament writers was

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8 In addition to works indicated throughout this essay, see also, among a number of others, e.g., R.T. France, Jesus and the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), S.J. Hafemann, Paul, Moses and the History of Israel (WUNT 81; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995), R. Watts, Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000, D.W. Pao, Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus (WUNT 2.130; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), J. Fekkes, Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation (JSNTSup 93; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), Beale, John’s Use of the Old Testament in Revelation (JSNTSup 166; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999), and D. Mathewson, A New Heaven and New Earth (JSNTSup 238; Sheffield Academic Press, 2003).
Fourth: Enns claims that the interpretative world of Second Temple Judaism is the primary context within which to understand the New Testament’s use of the Old Testament (e.g., 116–17). The problem with this is that the Jewish interpretative world is not uniform. There are some ‘wild and crazy’ uses of the Old Testament, but there is also some good and sophisticated exegesis. Enns makes no acknowledgement of the two kinds of exegesis (biblical–theological and typological), that I refer to in the New Testament (above) that also is present in early Judaism. He assumes that the warp and woof of Jewish hermeneutics is not grammatical–historical or concerned with an Old Testament author’s original intention or with Old Testament context (130–31). He, however, offers only a few examples that he believes support his view, again without entertaining other possible interpretative perspectives on these texts (121–31). His view, therefore, becomes a presupposition with little adduced evidence supporting it. Again, he could have listed more examples, even if he did not have the room to elaborate on them.

It is significant that elsewhere Enns does acknowledge some diversity in early Judaism:

What has become clear from these [pseudepigraphical] texts is that Judaism in the centuries following the exile was a diverse phenomenon: there are *Judaisms* but no ‘Second Temple Judaism’. This is important for both Christians and Jews to keep in mind. The line from biblical Israelite religion does not run straight to either of its two heirs, Judaism or Christianity. Rather, the Second Temple evidence in general shows a number of varied and competing trajectories, all of which claim biblical precedent.\(^\text{11}\)

In the same article, however, Enns goes on to deduce just what he does in his book and WTJ article: that Second Temple Judaism, while diverse in other respects, reflected a common hermeneutical approach that influenced the way New Testament writers interpreted the Old Testament:

The ways in which both rabbinic Judaism and the NT authors interact with their Scripture did not arise in a vacuum. Rather, both demonstrate hermeneutical methods and conclusions demonstrable

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in many, many Second Temple texts ... In fact, similar hermeneutical trajectories were already set within the Hebrew Scriptures (the Chronicler's interpretation of Israel's history; Daniel's interpretation of Jeremiah's seventy years as seventy 'sevens' of years). How the rabbis and the apostles handled their Scripture must be understood within the context of earlier interpretative activity ... The Pseudepigrapha, therefore, contribute to the church's own understanding of its Bible, insofar as they outline general interpretative trajectories adopted by NT authors.\(^\text{12}\)

In the context of the article, and especially the wider context of Enns' book and WTJ article, the main 'interpretative trajectories' influencing New Testament writers were that of non-contextual Jewish exegesis of the Old Testament and a dependence on Jewish interpretations of Old Testament history that had dubious historical claims (with respect to the latter, he cites Acts 7:53; 1 Cor. 10:4; Gal. 3:19; and Heb. 2:2). Thus, while recognizing in a number of respects that Second Temple Judaism was composed of many 'Judaism's', with regard to hermeneutics, Enns believes that there was a generally uniform non-contextual approach to Old Testament interpretation, which was the dominant influence on the New Testament approach.\(^\text{13}\)

Enns needed to acknowledge that part of the diversity of early Judaism was that it was characterized by diverse exegetical methods or approaches. There were probably various Jewish communities that were not identical in their interpretative approach to the Old Testament (DSS, Philo, pre-AD 70 Pharisaic Palestinian Judaism, and some Jewish apocalyptic communities). Thus, it is more proper to speak of 'Judaism's' or various Jewish communities when also speaking of Jewish interpretative approaches.

For example, it would have been helpful for Enns to have shown awareness of, and briefly evaluate David Instone Brewer's work that argues that pre-AD 70 pharisaic exegesis attempted to find the 'literal' meaning of Old Testament texts, though they did not always succeed at it.\(^\text{14}\) In this


\(^{13}\) The same focus is to be found in Enns, 'Biblical Interpretation, Jewish', in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, edd. by C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 159–65.

\(^{14}\) David Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 ce*
to develop Old Testament texts in various ways that emerge out of, and are not inconsistent with the original intention of Old Testament writers.  

Third: Enns identifies four views of dealing with these problems (115), the last of which he espouses and which some will find difficult to accept. He says:

there are three popular options in evangelical scholarship for addressing the odd manner in which the New Testament authors use the Old Testament:

1. To argue, wherever possible, that the New Testament authors, despite appearances, were actually respecting the context of the Old Testament text they are citing. Although it may not be obvious to us, there must be some legitimate trigger in the Old Testament text, since no inspired writer would handle the Old Testament so irresponsibly. Careful examination will reveal that the New Testament’s use of the Old Testament text is actually based in and is consistent with that Old Testament author’s intention.

2. To concede that the New Testament author is not using the Old Testament text in a manner in which it was intended, but then to say that the New Testament author himself does not intend to ‘interpret’ the text, only ‘apply’ it. Since the New Testament does not intend to present us with hermeneutical models for how it handles the Old Testament, it poses no difficulty for us today.

3. To concede, on a variation of option 2, that the New Testament authors were not following the intention of the Old Testament authors, but to explain it as a function of apostolic authority. In other words, since they were inspired, they could do as they pleased. We are not inspired, so we cannot follow their lead (115).

Enns responds to these three views in the following manner:

In my opinion, all three of these views – although motivated by noble concerns to protect the Bible from abuse – will not stand up to close examination. As we go through the examples in this chapter, we will comment on these views here and there, but I will state my conclusions up front:

(1) The New Testament authors were not engaging the Old Testament in an effort to remain consistent with the original context and intention of the Old Testament author.

(2) They were indeed commenting on what the text meant.\(^\text{10}\)

(3) The hermeneutical attitude they embodied should be embraced and followed by the church today.

To put it succinctly, the New Testament authors were explaining what the Old Testament means *in light of Christ’s coming* (115–16).

I believe, contrary to Enns’, that view no. 1 can be held without embarrassment and can ‘stand up to close examination’, particularly when one remembers that there are other viable forms of relating the Old Testament to the New Testament than by mere ‘grammatical–historical’ exegesis. I would contend that it is the view that makes most sense of the data, without strained interpretations, than the other positions, including that of Enns. Again, to demonstrate the probability of his view, Enns would have to adduce many, many more examples of so-called ‘non–contextual’ exegesis than he has. What is especially striking is Enns’ claim that ‘the odd uses of the Old Testament by New Testament authors are such a very common dimension of the New Testament that it quickly becomes special pleading to argue otherwise’ (116). But must not ‘special pleading’ remain in Enns’ lap, since he does not attempt to adduce all the many examples of ‘odd uses’ that he claims exist? Remember, he only adduces eight examples. He could have listed other examples, even if he did not have the space to discuss them.

\(^{10}\) Note significantly here that Enns distinguishes ‘what the text meant’ from ‘the original context and intention of the Old Testament author’ that he mentions in his preceding point #no. 1.
respect, there may be a distinction in the interpretative approach of pre–AD 70 Judaism and that of later Judaism. In addition, there is a strong strain in early Jewish apocalyptic texts which reveals a contextual awareness of the Old Testament contexts from which they cite. Furthermore, when one thinks of Hillel’s seven rules of (Jewish) interpretation, none of them show any concern to twist the meaning of Old Testament texts, but could well be compatible with a contextual interpretation of the Old Testament (e.g., none of the rules include allegory or a necessary atomistic interpretation of the Old Testament).

In this respect, the sage assessment of Samuel Sandmel needs, at least, to be given acknowledgement. He concluded after long study of the relationship of Egyptian Judaism to Palestinian Judaism, that ‘independent, parallel developments seem the better explanation than that of major dependency in either direction.’ The first context for understanding the hermeneutical approach, as well as interpretative presuppositions, of New Testament writers is their own community (under the influence of Jesus), then the Old Testament, and then Judaism. Both are spurs from the Old Testament, rather than the New Testament, being primarily dependent on some branch of Jewish hermeneutics, though certainly in awareness of and in dialogue with sectors of Judaism. Also, when one looks at early Jewish

(Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 30; Tübingen: Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1992).

15 Brewer’s criteria for dating pre–AD 70 materials were not as clearly developed in his Techniques and Assumptions (11–13) as in his subsequently published Prayer and Agriculture, Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament i (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 38–40 (see also the secondary sources cited therein by Brewer for further discussion of dating criteria).

16 See, e.g., G.K. Beale, The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1984), 12–153, and L. Hartman, Prophecy Interpreted (Coniectanea Biblica; NT Series 1; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1966), 11–141; e.g., see his summaries on pp. 126 and 139, the latter of which where he makes a distinction between the contextual use of the Old Testament in apocalyptic Judaism but not in Qumran. Hartman sees the use of Daniel 7–12 in Mark 13 (and parallels) to reflect the pattern of the contextual use of the Old Testament in Jewish apocalyptic texts (Ibid., 145–47, 158–59, 174, 207, 235).


19 E.g., one New Testament hermeneutical presupposition that has its roots in the
interpretation through the lens of a ‘biblical – theological approach’ or a ‘typological approach’, the exegesis does not always appear so twisted.20

One may disagree with these perspectives and attempt to argue against them, but why does Enns not even acknowledge them? Enns needed to adduce not only what he thinks are examples of non-contextual Jewish exegeses, but also cases where there are straightforward attempts to understand Old Testament texts, of which there are plenty of examples.

Therefore, exegetical approaches differed in Judaism and to say that there was a generally uniform approach that was non-contextual not only does not acknowledge some of the key features of Second Temple exegesis, but it also produces an artificial reductionism and an artificial monolithic hermeneutical appearance. We may say that just as there were variegated views in Judaism on many things and not just one ‘systematic theology’ (e.g., on the notion of the law in relation to faith, works, and final reward), so hermeneutics was variegated. Thus, there is not one dominant pattern in Second Temple Jewish exegesis that predetermines how the New Testament authors must behave hermeneutically.

In contrast to Enns, a good argument can be made that the interpretative method of the New Testament is rooted in the Old Testament’s use of the Old Testament and that various early Jewish communities, including the early Jewish–Christian community, practised an interpretative approach shaped by the Old Testament’s exegetical

Old Testament is the notion of corporate solidarity or ‘the one and the many;’ thus the idea that Jesus the Messiah corporately represents his people as true Israel is an outgrowth of the concept that Israel’s kings represented their people (e.g., Israel was punished for David’s representative sin of numbering the people [1 Chron. 21:1–17]). Likewise, the New Testament writers’ presupposition that they were living in the inaugurated eschatological age comes directly out of the Old Testament prophecy that the messianic age was to be an ‘eschatological period’ (e.g., Gen. 49:1 and 49:8–12; Num. 24:14–18; Dan. 2:28–45; Isa. 2:2–4 and 11:1–4; etc.). See further G.K. Beale, ‘Questions of Authorial Intent, Epistemology, and Presuppositions and Their Bearing on the Study of the Old Testament in the New: a Rejoinder to Steve Moyise’, Irish Biblical Studies 21 (1999), 169 and passim (151–80). On ‘typology’ as a presuppositional hermeneutical approach also rooted in the Old Testament, see Ellis, Paul’s Use of the OT, 131, as well as Beale, ‘Questions of Authorial Intent’, 169.

20 E.g., Enns concludes that the use of the Old Testament in the Qumran commentary on Habakkuk (10qHab) is very non-contextual and inconsistent with the original meaning (128–31), but it may well be that when this use is seen through a ‘typological’ lens, the Qumran author’s approach to the Old Testament may be like that in a number of New Testament texts that understand the Old Testament typologically.
method. True, they share some things with each other, but they also differ significantly. C.H. Dodd, no evangelical, contended that the greatest influence on the apostles’ method was Jesus, whom Dodd contended had a very contextual approach to understanding how the Old Testament related to him and his redemptive work.21 In fact, even granting for the sake of argument that there was a monolithic non-contextual Jewish hermeneutic, could not Jesus, who in other ways came to break a lot of the traditional taboos of Jewish tradition, have come with an approach to biblical interpretation formed more by the Old Testament’s use of the Old Testament than by that of contemporary Judaism?22 This is not to have a ‘fundamentalist’ or too conservative of an approach to the Old in the New. In fact, among others, some of the leading contemporary German scholars who work in this area affirm the same methodological approach to the relation of Jewish exegetical procedures and that of Paul. For example, Hans Hübner writes:

In fact, it has turned out by the preliminary work to this biblical study of the New Testament, that, for example, Paul through his exegetical procedure modified quite strangely what we know as Jewish methods of interpretation. Actually, concerning Paul as an exegete, and to be precise to understand him as a Christian exegete, who understood himself as the reader inspired by the Spirit and interpreter of the scripture, the characteristic of his exegesis must be brought out. And this characteristic is not deduced just when one takes Jewish methodology as the key of understanding. Its modification by Paul is crucial for his theological acquaintance with the scriptures!

This fact is clearly recognized also in that work, which, today, is the standard work on Paul and the Old Testament, and which, therefore, has replaced Otto Michel’s book in this function, namely the Mainzer Habilitationsschrift by Dietrich Alex Koch, Die Schrift als

21 Dodd, According to the Scriptures (Digswell Place, Welwyn, Herts: James Nisbet and Co. Ltd., 1952).

22 Enns would likely respond here that later Old Testament authors did not contextually interpret earlier Old Testament writings, but, again, he produces scanty evidence to substantiate this claim, focusing only on the interpretation of Jeremiah’s ‘seventy years’ by Daniel 9 (117–20), one of the thorniest passages in all of the Old Testament to interpret!
Zeuge des Evangeliums, Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus. [Eng. trans., The Scripture as a Witness to the Gospel: Investigations into the Use and into the Understanding of the Scriptures by Paul]. Koch identifies divergences between the Jewish–Hellenistic and Rabbinic interpretation of scripture, on the one hand, and that of Paul, on the other hand. Therefore, he arrives at a correct methodological principle: “One is dependent, therefore, regarding the methods of interpretation of scripture which must be assumed for Paul, on conclusions from his own letters.” So also, the acquaintance of the New Testament authors with the scripture should be analyzed in the Mesolegomena [the following volume of Hübner’s work] first of all, independently from the Jewish methods of interpretation, and there, where it is meaningful, where it is necessary because of the understanding of the procedure of a New Testament author, the Jewish methodology will also be discussed.23

Fifth: Enns says conservative evangelicals have a ‘hermeneutical grid’ that they ‘impose’ on the text through which to read the Old Testament in the New (156), but Enns also has his own version of a ‘christolctelic’ systematic grid. The question is which ‘grid’ best explains the evidence.

Both Enns and his purported opponents – ‘conversation partners’ – use so-called modern reason to investigate the Bible. The key is which ‘hermeneutical grid’ best makes ‘reasonable’ sense of the majority of the biblical data.

Sixth: Enns comments on Jewish traditions that are reflected in the New Testament (143–51), which for the most part he implies have a precarious historical basis. He gives the impression that the New Testament is permeated with such traditions, but he gives only six examples. Without citing more examples, readers will not be persuaded that such Jewish traditions are part of the warp and woof of the New Testament. He could, at least, have listed more examples, even if he did not choose to discuss them. Most of the examples he cites are not problematic with respect to questions of historical reliability. Many of the traditions may be understood by recollecting that there was oral tradition that arose together with the

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written Old Testament Scripture. Some of what Judaism and the New Testament reflect may well be this, or at least prior traditions (some of which may well not be of fictitious origin but have historical roots). Alternatively they may be understood as mere interpretative expansions of the Old Testament, perhaps based on Jewish exegetical tradition. 24 Though Enns leaves the impression that these examples are historically problematic, the sources of such things are so speculative that it is not wise to make decisions definitively one way or another about them (e.g., to say they are definitely legend, fiction or non-historical would be a speculative conclusion).

It is too speculative for Enns to say, as in the case of Paul’s reference to the ‘rock that followed’ in 1 Corinthians 10:4, that ‘the brevity of the allusion [by Paul to the Jewish tradition about the following rock] bespeaks the fact that it must have been in wide circulation already in Paul’s day’. 25 Although it is possible, it is not as probable as Enns maintains. The brief allusion could just as well be to Paul’s biblical—theological understanding of Yahweh’s identification with the ‘rock’ that ‘walked after’ Israel (as we suggest below). No argument should be based primarily on the ‘brevity of the allusion’.

Enns concludes that Paul’s allusion to the ‘rock that followed’ in 1 Corinthians 10:4 is dependent on a Jewish ‘tradition’ about a well that followed Israel around in the wilderness. 26 There is, however, only one Jewish reference to this ‘tradition’ that plausibly is dated around the first century AD. Even part of this reference is clouded by textual uncertainty. 27 Thus, it is difficult to be sure what form of the legend existed in Paul’s

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26 This section of Enns’ book is based on his above article in BBR, 23–38.

27 The lone Jewish source is Pseudo–Philo, which is dated by the majority of scholars as early as the first century AD, though there is some debate even about that (see Bauckham, ‘Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum of Pseudo–Philo and the Gospels as “Midrash”’, 33, and, more recently, B.N. Fisk, Do You Not Remember? Scripture, Story and Exegesis in the Rewritten Bible of Pseudo–Philo [JSPSup 37; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001], 34–40). Enns adduced three texts in Pseudo–Philo that he believes together support the idea that a well-shaped rock followed Israel in the wilderness (Ps.–Philo 10:7; 11:15; 20:8); however, since 20:8 does not explicitly refer to a well or water that ‘follows’, only 10:7 (God ‘brought forth a well of water to follow them’) and 11:15 could clearly support the idea, the latter reading: ‘and the water of Marah became sweet. And it [the well or the water]
time. Furthermore, Paul does not refer to a 'well'. He may well be doing a biblical – theological exegesis of Exodus 14–17 in the light of Psalm 78:14–20 (e.g., 'he splits the rocks ... and gave them abundant drink ...')

followed them in the wilderness forty years and went up to the mountain with them and went down into the plains.' However, while some very good manuscripts (the D – group of mss. [A, K, P]) have 'it followed', the majority of manuscripts (the π – group of mss. [H, R, W, X, Y, Z, S, Ad, D, E, V, M, B, C, O, G]), which are also manuscripts of very good, indeed almost equal, authority with the D – group of manuscripts, have 'the Lord [Dominus] followed' (on which see the critical edition of the Latin text of Pseudo-Philo edited by D.J. Harrington and J. Cazeaux, Pseudo-Philo: Les Antiquités Bibliques, Vol. I [SourcesChrétienes series 229; Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976], 124; see 53–57 for the relative values of both ms. groups). Though Harrington does not prefer 'Lord' in his English translation ('Pseudo-Philo', in The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 2, ed. by J.H. Charlesworth [Garden City: Doubleday, 1985], 319), in fact, the quality of the external evidence for both readings is almost equal. It is difficult to determine the original reading. Whichever is original, the variant could have been caused possibly by an unintentional error or, more probably, an intentional one. The more difficult reading, and thus more likely original, in the light of the clear reference to the 'following well' in 10:7, would appear to be 'Lord' (a scribe with 10:7 clearly in mind would tend to want to harmonize 11:15 with 10:7, thus deleting 'Lord', so that the well or the water from the well is viewed as the subject of the 'following'). This could be debated, but our intention here is merely to point out the textual uncertainty. If 'Lord' is the correct reading, then the identification of the 'following well' in 10:7 (as well as presumably, in 20:8) would apparently be the Lord himself in 11:15 (who, accordingly, would also be identified with 'the water' in the preceding clause of 11:15), which may have been inspired by the close identification of the rock from which water came in Exod. 17:6 with the phrase 'is the Lord among us?' in 17:7 (on which see further the next note below [n. 28] for the rationale). Put another way, if 'Lord' is original, then the 'following well' in 10:7 and the 'water' in the preceding clause of 11:15 could well be viewed as metaphorical for the 'Lord' in 11:15, which would take the legendary punch out of the evidence. At the least, even if 'Lord' is unoriginal, the variant came to represent part of the exegetical tradition that may well have been existent in Paul's day and would need to be reckoned as part of the possible background for Paul's reference in 1 Cor. 10:4. It is noteworthy to observe that the only early texts (presuming, for the sake of argument, an original 'Lord' in Pseudo-Philo 11:15 or that this reading was early) that identify the water from the rock with the divine presence is Pseudo-Philo 10:7 + 11:15 and 1 Cor. 10:4 (remembering Paul's divine identification of Christ in 1 Cor. 8:6), which could point to a link between this Jewish tradition and Paul, but in a different way than Enns contends. Unfortunately, Enns does not mention this significant textual uncertainty in his BBR article.

The other references to a 'following well' are in the later midrashic and targumic literature, though Enns still contends that 'some form of the legend apparently did exist' earlier ('Moveable Well', 25), which is expressed with much less conviction than his conclusion about Paul's knowledge of this legendary tradition in the book:
Right Doctrine from Wrong Texts?

he struck the rock so that waters gushed out') and 78:35 ('God was their rock'), the latter of which appears to identify God with the 'rock' of Psalm 78:15–16, 20.29

What does Enns mean when he says that Paul is dependent on this Jewish 'tradition'? One must refer to his article on the 'Moveable Well', to which he refers the reader for further discussion. In his BBR article, although Enns says that he prefers to use the phrase 'exegetical tradition' or merely 'tradition' instead of either 'fable' or 'legend',30 he is not uncomfortable in referring to Paul's conscious dependence on this spurious tradition of the moveable well as 'legend'. Elsewhere in his article, he uses 'legend' in place of his preferred 'tradition'. He affirms that Paul believed the legend 'was really the case' and that he was 'relaying

'I think it is beyond reasonable doubt' that 'Paul's comment be understood as another example of this tradition' (151). In this light, a more judicious assessment is that it is difficult to be sure what form of the legend existed in Paul's time. Note also some of the differences between Paul's reference and that of later Judaism: (1) he identifies the rock as the Messiah, (2) he does not use the language of a 'well' and (3) he refers to the 'rock' from which they drank as a 'spiritual rock' from which 'spiritual drink' was obtained (1 Cor. 10:4), not a literal rock, significant differences with the later Jewish legend, which appears to see a literal travelling well that 'followed' Israel. Incidentally, note also that the idea of God in association with a 'rock' that 'followed' Israel in the wilderness is not unique to the later Jewish midrashic literature but occurs also in Exod. 14:19 in relation to Exod. 17:5—7, where the presence of the rock from which drinking water came is also interpreted to be affirming that or is directly linked to the phrase 'the Lord is among us' in response to the people's doubt about this. In this respect, note the 'following' concept in Exod. 14:19: 'and the angel of God who had been walking before the camp of Israel, moved and walked behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.' And the presence of God continues to move between the Egyptians and the Israelites as the latter go through the sea. Note similarly that Isa. 52:12 and 58:8 allude to Exod. 14:19 and prophesy that in the new, second Exodus God would also be Israel's 'rear guard.' Thus, in light of the fact that Exod. 17:6 very closely associates God with the 'rock' (as does Psalm 78 [see below]), it does not take much ingenuity to see how Paul could posit that Christ was a 'following rock' in his pre-incarnate divine existence as the 'angel of the Lord'. Paul may be doing intratextual and intertextual exegesis, which is a form of biblical theology. Thus, Enns' attempt to say that the 'following' aspect is unique to the Jewish well legend is not correct, since both linguistically and conceptually the notion occurs in the Old Testament itself.

As we have seen, commentators like Ellis, Paul's Use of the Old Testament, 66–70, see Paul using a typological hermeneutic in 1 Cor. 10:4 and not being dependent on the Jewish legend.

30 'The 'Moveable Well', p. 29, n. 14.
information that for him was trustworthy’, though, of course it was in reality, ‘legendary’.\textsuperscript{31} In this respect, he says, ‘in fact, there is no indication that in any of the examples listed [including 1 Cor. 10:4] that suggest the “legendary” material about to be introduced into these otherwise authoritative works [of the apostolic writers] were of lesser value’.\textsuperscript{32} That he believes that Paul unconsciously absorbed this legend and believed it was true nevertheless, is also clear from a question that he poses and to which he gives a positive answer:

After all, if at the very climax of redemptive history, the Holy Spirit can do no better than communicate the supreme Good News through \textit{pedestrian and uninspired Jewish legends}, in what sense can we claim that the New Testament revelation is special, distinct, and unique? The question, however, can be put on its head: on what basis ought we to assume that Paul’s understanding of the Old Testament was unique? To put it another way, is there anything about the nature of God’s revelation itself that necessarily demands its uniqueness over against the environment in which that revelation is given?\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Ibid.}, 37. Also he says, ‘the following rock, however, ‘clearly brings him [Paul] into connection with the Palestinian legend” (following the position of H.S.J. Thackery [\textit{Ibid.}, 25, n. 8]). Likewise, on p. 33 Enns affirms, ‘I would push this one step further, that for Paul such ‘Jewish lore’ actually represented his own understanding of the event;’ recall here that Enns in the immediate context refers to this as legendary lore that does not correspond to historical reality.

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Ibid.}, 37 (why he puts legendary in quotation marks is not clear, but quotation marks are not the ordinary stylistic convention to indicate a caveat; so we take no caveat intended here). See also p. 32, where Enns says that Paul ‘was simply talking about the biblical story [of the rock in the wilderness] in the only way he knows how, in accordance with the way he (and his audience as well) had received it’ (i.e., we understand Enns to mean that they had received it as legend). Likewise, he quotes and disagrees with the following views of some scholars who deny that 1 Cor. 10:4 is based on legend: ‘Godet makes explicit an apologetic motive by arguing that ‘the most spiritual of the apostles’ could hardly have ‘alluded to so ridiculous a fable’ .... C. Hodge comments that the presence of this tradition in 1 Cor. 10:4 would make ‘the apostle responsible for this Jewish fable, and is inconsistent with his divine authority.” Enns’ point throughout the article is that dependence on legend is not inconsistent with divine authority.

\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}, 35 (my italics).
Enns answers ‘no’ to each of these questions: the New Testament revelation was not ‘unique’ to its environment that believed in ‘legends’ (though he would certainly say that the New Testament writers believed that Christ and the God of the Old and New Testaments were respectively the true Messiah and true God, in contrast to the gods of other religions). He also assumes that divine revelation is communicated through these ‘legends’. He provides a fuller answer to the above questions a little later:

To affirm that Paul’s ‘the rock that followed them’ is an unconscious transmission of a popular exegetical tradition [= ‘legend’ elsewhere in his article] does not compromise revelation but boldly affirms it at its very heart. Scripture was revealed in time and space, so it bears the marks of that historical quality at various levels [including, Enns means, the level of the presence of legend].

For Enns, the New Testament is authoritative, even in those places where legend is present. Readers will have to decide whether or not Enns has made a convincing case about the influence of the moveable well legend upon Paul (I, for one, am not persuaded). However, this, for Enns, is only one example of the kind of legendary material that exists in the New Testament, and, as we have laboured to show elsewhere, also in the Old Testament (on which see further directly below).

It is important to remark that conservative commentators have not been averse to observing ‘myth’ or ‘legend’ in the Old or New Testaments. But when it has been observed, it has been reasonably clear to most conservative scholars that the biblical writers refer to such false traditions in order to conduct a polemic against, and repudiate false religious tradition (its gods and their titles or attributes, its way of salvation, etc.). as well as reflecting that even pagan peoples have a perception of truth through general revelation or access to very ancient traditions, which have been integrated in flawed ways into their false religion (Rom. 1:19–23

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34 Ibid., 36. See also p. 32, where Enns makes the same point.
36 See, Inspiration and Incarnation, 41, where Enns himself acknowledges something close to this possibility.

Themeios 32/1
testifies to this). Likewise, biblical writers did not always directly counter ancient Near Eastern concepts, but sometimes used them in creative ways, though still revised in significant manner by special revelation, without an unconscious absorption of myth.\(^{37}\)

But Enns is saying something quite different from this: that Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:4 did not distinguish his own beliefs from the false beliefs of the Jewish culture around him. I find this unlikely, especially because I am unconvinced that he has made his case that Paul is dependent on Jewish legend. In addition, I am unpersuaded of Enns’ thesis at points throughout his book that God communicates truth through such full-blown myth unconsciously held by Old Testament writers, but I have elaborated on this elsewhere.\(^{38}\)

The Implications of Enns’ Book for Providing Guidelines for Biblical Interpretation

What are some of the implications of Enns’ views on the use of the Old Testament in the New? In commenting on the ramifications of his conclusions about the New Testament use of the Old Testament, Enns offers the following reflections about preachers, whom he obviously wants to hear what he says:

I see regularly the almost unbearable burden we place on our preachers by expecting them, in a week’s time, to read a passage, determine its meaning, and then communicate it effectively. The burden of ‘getting it right’ can sometimes be discouraging and hinder effective ministry. I would rather think of biblical interpretation as a path we walk, a pilgrimage we take, whereby the longer we walk and take in the surrounding scenes, the more people we stop and converse with along the way, and the richer our interpretation will be (162).


\(^{38}\) On which see my review of the other chapters of Enns’ book in JETS 49 (2006), cited earlier, where I contend that there are hermeneutical, theological, epistemological, and logical problems with such a view.
In developing this thought further a few pages later, he says:

There do not seem to be any clear rules or guidelines to prevent us from taking this process [of biblical interpretation] too far. But again, this is why the metaphor of journey or pilgrimage is so appealing (171).

This conclusion comes on the heels of his last chapter in which he has decided that the interpretative method of the New Testament writers is not sensitive to the contextual ideas of Old Testament authors’ original intentions. He thinks we should model our interpretative method on that of the New Testament (170). But, according to his view of apostolic exegesis, this means there are really ‘no rules’ for good interpretation, and, carried to its logical practical conclusion, it suggests that there is no method of good exegesis that ultimately can be a reasonable guard against preachers not ‘getting it right’. Enns’ following comment is also consistent with such a conclusion:

A christotelic coherence is not achieved by following a few simple rules of exegesis. It is to be sought after; over a long period of time, in community with other Christians, with humility and patience. Biblical interpretation is ... a path we walk rather than a fortress we defend (170).

Ultimately, the clear implication of Enns’ position is that there is no interpretative approach to restrain our eisegetical tendencies. He does acknowledge that ‘what helps prevent (but does not guarantee against) such flights of [interpretative] fancy is grammatical–historical exegesis’ (159). However, he then significantly qualifies this by saying:

However much we might regard certain Second Temple interpretive methods and traditions as unworkable in our modern context, we still cannot simply fill the void by adopting the grammatical–historical methods as the default and exclusively normative hermeneutic for modern Christians. Why? To lift up grammatical–historical exegesis as the ultimate standard means we must either (1) distance ourselves from the christotelic hermeneutic of the apostles or (2) mount arguments showing that apostolic hermeneutics is actually grounded
in the grammatical-historical meaning of the Old Testament, and that all this talk about the Second Temple context is just nonsense that can be safely avoided (159).

Of course, by this point in the book the reader will understand why Enns says that neither of these are viable options. At the end of the day, it appears evident that for Enns the christotelic hermeneutic is accorded pride of place as the more determinative hermeneutical approach than the grammatical-historical, since the latter approach by itself ‘is not a Christian understanding in the apostolic sense’ (159). Consequently, “getting it [biblical interpretation] right” (162) (i.e., attempting to understand an Old Testament author’s authorial intention) in a particular pericope of Scripture for Enns is not the ultimate proper focus, even though, as we have seen, he still wants to affirm some kind of important, though subordinate, role for grammatical-historical exegesis.

What then does one make of Paul's admonition to Timothy, ‘be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth’ (2 Tim. 2:15; likewise 1 Tim. 4:15-16). James says that ‘teachers ... shall incur a stricter judgment’ (3:1) (presumably, Enns would say that the New Testament writers’ standards of ‘handling accurately the word of truth’ are different from ours). So, there is a great responsibility that preachers and teachers of God's Word have. Should it be alleviated in the way that Enns advocates or by relativizing the Pauline admonitions for the modern church by affirming that they were uniquely applicable to an ancient Christian mindset? While paying attention to some of Enns’ admonitions, should not pastors be encouraged to rest on God’s grace and realize that no one has an exhaustive grasp on comprehending God’s Word, but those with the gift of teaching have the ability to grasp sufficiently, more richly, and, therefore, definitely, what God would have them convey to his people Sunday after Sunday? In this respect, it is unfortunate that the conclusions of Enns’ book have led him to such a pessimistic pedagogical and homiletical conclusion. In this regard, Enns’ book is a good example that

39 The same qualification is made on p. 160, where he says that he does ‘not mean to make sweeping statements against exegetical methods or grammatical-historical exegesis. But ... we can only conclude that there must be more to Christian biblical interpretation than uncovering the original meaning of an Old Testament passage’. In context, he emphasizes the latter over the former. Likewise, on p. 154 he says
one's exegesis has practical application, an application in this case that is not a felicitous one.

To repeat, if Enns had allowed for other interpretative approaches (such as a biblical–theological approach,\textsuperscript{40} a typological approach,\textsuperscript{41} etc.) besides the polarized 'grammatical–historical' against the 'christotelic', then he may not have been so constrained to make the kind of conclusions that he did. This problem of method is compounded by the fact, observed earlier, that Enns' discussion of examples of non-contextual exegesis in the New Testament includes only his view of each example, and he does not cite or interact with other representative views that differ from his own.

The Implications of Enns’ Book for Providing Guidelines for the Doing of Biblical Theology

The significance of this discussion should not be limited to exegetical method because it also has a bearing on how to do biblical theology. This is because the use of the Old Testament in the New is commonly considered to be essential to understanding the theological relation of the testaments, which many scholars have acknowledged.\textsuperscript{42} If New Testament writers did

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\textsuperscript{40} There is not space to elaborate on a definition of this here. Suffice it to say, that a biblical–theological approach attempts to interpret texts in the light of their broader literary context, their broader redemptive–historical epoch of which they are a part, and to interpret earlier texts from earlier epochs, attempting to explain them in the light of progressive revelation to which earlier scriptural authors would not have had access. So, one aspect of biblical theology is the reading of texts in an intra–textual and inter–textual manner in a way not ultimately distorting their original meaning, though perhaps creatively developing it. As noted earlier, I believe that an example of such an approach can be found in, among other places, my recent book, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, as well as Enns' comments above on how Matthew might have understood Hosea 11:1.

\textsuperscript{41} For the different definitions of such an approach and literature discussing it, see Beale, *The Right Doctrine from Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New*, 313–71, 387–404 (my own view is aligned with the articles therein by G.P. Hugenberger, F. Foulkes, and my own last article in the volume).

not interpret Old Testament passages in some manner commensurate to the original meaning, then a hiatus remains between the way they understood the Old Testament and its theology and the way Old Testament authors understood their own writings, both exegetically and theologically. Geerhardus Vos, the great biblical-theological icon of the old Princeton – Westminster tradition, affirmed that at the heart of biblical theology is ‘the organic progress ... from seed – to the attainment of full growth’ and that ‘in the seed form the minimum of indispensable knowledge was already present’ for the revelation later in the Old Testament and subsequently in the New.43 While the later progressive revelatory apple tree might appear different from its earlier biblical seed form, Vos would maintain that they are, nevertheless organically linked and that, ultimately, the latter develops naturally from the former, just as happens in nature between seeds and their later organic developments.

Enns’ perspective cuts the cords of this organic revelation, so that later biblical writers do not develop the original ideas of earlier biblical writers. At best, he can posit that broad Old Testament themes are picked up by New Testament writers. Even in this respect, however, he cannot see such themes to be rooted in a collection of Old Testament texts, since he does not believe that the early Christian writers could perceive the original thematic intention of Old Testament texts, even apparently collections of such texts. Indeed, we may ask, in what sense a New Testament author would perceive an Old Testament theme if it were not present and perceivable in several texts throughout the Old Testament? Accordingly, it seems that it would be difficult for Enns to say that broad themes from the Old Testament are relatable to the New.

Consequently, it appears that Enns’ approach on the Old in the New will necessitate developing a new approach to biblical theology, which will be quite different methodologically from that of Vos and other similar approaches. Indeed, it would appear that biblical theology as conceived over the past century in conservative scholarly circles is now outmoded, if Enns’ perspective is correct.

43 Vos, Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 7.
Conclusion

Enns answers the question ‘did Jesus and the apostles preach the right doctrine from the wrong texts?’ with a resounding ‘yes’, and he says that God’s people today should do the same. I have given reasons why I disagree with this assessment.

I have written this review article in some depth because the book is designed primarily to address a more popular audience, as well as, (though only secondarily), a scholarly readership.\(^{44}\) I have wanted to elaborate on Enns’ views because the issues are significant for Christian faith, and popular readers may not have the requisite tools and background to evaluate the thorny issues that Enns’ book addresses. I have also written this review for a scholarly evangelical audience, since the book appears to be secondarily intended for them\(^ {45}\) and, I suspect, that there will be different evaluations of Enns’ book by such an audience.\(^ {46}\)

Many of Enns’ assumptions are wide-ranging and debatable, the primary evidence of Judaism and the New Testament selective, as well as the secondary sources he cites,\(^ {47}\) so that it is hard to do justice in evaluating this fourth chapter of his book in a brief manner.

Enns’ perspectives on the use of the Old Testament in the New

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44 Note where Enns indicates his purpose in addressing a more popular audience (e.g., 13, 15, 168), though these statements do not exclude a scholarly audience.

45 E.g., the publishers distributed complimentary copies to biblical scholars at the recent November, 2005 Institute for Biblical Research Meeting.


47 Enns does cite bibliography for ‘further reading’ at the end of his chapter on the Old Testament in the New Testament (with very brief abstracts), but he does not engage them evaluatively in the body of his chapter (indeed, very few of the nineteen sources listed, clearly offer contrasting views of the biblical texts that he discusses). This often leaves readers with the impression that Enns’ perspective and evidence for his arguments is the primary or only viable perspective or evidence. The only way readers would learn otherwise is by doing some research and reading in secondary literature.
Testament are, no doubt, generally representative of others, including scholars within the evangelical academic guild. So, I am grateful for Enns’ further elaboration and development of this approach, even though I have registered disagreement with it. As we all interact with varying perspectives we are bound to examine our own views in more depth, which is a healthy enterprise, for which I am also thankful to Enns for inspiring me to do. I have been sharpened by reading and interacting with this part of his stimulating book.48

48 I am grateful to several scholars for reading and commenting on this article. I am especially indebted to Peter Spychalla, my doctoral student, for reading and proofing this article, and particularly for discussing and for obtaining for me the critical edition of the Latin text of Pseudo – Philo referred to in note 28, concerning the textual variant in Pseudo – Philo 11:15. Spychalla is presently working on a dissertation on the Old Testament and Jewish background of 1 Corinthians 10:4.