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We apologize for publication delays in recent years. We assure you that all overdue issues are in process and will be mailed as each is printed. We plan to be back on our normal quarterly publication schedule by January 2008. Thank you for your patience! The Editors

With a View to the End: Christ in the Ancient Church's Understanding of Scripture

Joel C. Elowsky

The ancient church took Jesus seriously when he told the Emmaus disciples, "everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). Augustine applied Jesus' words even to the Psalm headings: "When you hear the text of the Psalm saying, 'with a view to the end,' let your hearts turn to Christ."¹ That phrase is nowhere in the formal text of the Psalms. You will find it in the Latin title of many of the Psalms, which is where Augustine found it and where he also found Christ. This christological interpretation of the Psalms was not simply a reading of Christ *into* the text (eisegesis). This was a reading *out* of the text enabled by the Spirit that fed into and nurtured the daily ecclesiastical, liturgical, and theological life of the church (exegesis).

In what follows, we will briefly explore this christocentric exegesis employed by the early church. At its most basic level, the question emerged as to why Scripture was even written in the first place. The two exegetical traditions of Alexandria and Antioch had slightly different answers to that question, but it is no secret that the Septuagint text they were primarily using made all the difference in their approach to the Scriptures, which testified of Christ. Once we have explored their use of this text, we will examine, in a more general sense, their exegetical approach and how this contributed to their understanding of Christ as the unitive center of Scripture.² We then will look at two fathers from the

¹ "Cum audis psalmum dicere 'in finem,' corda concertantur ad Christum," Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Corpus Christianorum: Series latina (CCSL), 51 vols. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–), 40:2013, 139.3. For this idea and what follows see Henri De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, 2 vols., tr. Mark Sebanc (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 1:237ff. De Lubac's work helped to frame much of the argument that follows and, moreover, helped to locate many of the patristic quotations, mining especially his copious notes in the back of his first volume, although I also consulted the sources from which these quotes came, providing those references as well.

² Each patristic writer, of course, had his own unique exegetical approach. These can be studied further in Bertrand de Margerie, *An Introduction to the History of Exegesis*, 3 vols. (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1991).

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early patristic period who actually did their exegetical work before the firm establishment of the different exegetical traditions. Justin Martyr's typology and Irenaeus's teaching of recapitulation are classic examples of exegesis centered in Christ and upon which others built their exegesis. I will further provide a unitive example of how this understanding came together as a whole in the ancient Christian interpretation of the book of Isaiah—almost a kind of Fifth Gospel in ancient Christian exegesis. Finally, I will conclude with some implications for the exegesis we do as pastors.

I. The Purpose of Scripture

Augustine and the ancient church were much more familiar with the presence of Christ in Scripture than many modern exegetes—some might say too familiar, finding Christ in some very unlikely places. Origen could find Christ's human and divine natures in the two tunics the high priest wore, for instance. For ancient exegetes, however, Scripture was not written for the sole purpose of communicating facts or the historical narrative, although those, too, have their purpose and are not ignored. Rather, the primary aim, or *skopos*, of Scripture, as Cyril of Alexandria states,

is the mystery of Christ signified to us through a myriad of different kinds of things. Someone might liken it to a glittering and magnificent city, having not one image of the king, but many, and publicly displayed in every corner of the city. . . . Its aim, however, is not to provide us an account of the lives of the saints of old. Far from that. Rather it seeks to give us knowledge of the mystery [of Christ] through those things by which the word about him might become clear and true.³

We learn at least two things from Cyril. First, Christ is present in Scripture in more ways than simply as the historical Jesus. There are many different images of Christ throughout the entirety of Scripture: in the Torah, the historical narratives, the Wisdom literature, the Prophets, the Gospels, and the Epistles. If these did not speak of Christ, they did not speak of anything, or at least they were ultimately unworthy of claiming God as their author since God would never author anything superfluous. Origen, in the fourth book of *On First Principles* (4.2.9), went so far as to say anything in Scripture that seemed illogical, caused scandal, or seemed unworthy of God was included in the text by God on purpose in order to indicate that it was to be interpreted spiritually and not according to the

³ Cyril of Alexandria, *Glaphyrorum in Genesim*, , *Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca* (PG), 162 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1857-1886), 69:308. 6.1.

letter.⁴ Later exegetes such as Cyril tempered Origen's allegory, but this does highlight a second point of Cyril's quotation.

Scripture's primary purpose is not to convey historical facts or a good story. Notice, it is not its *primary* purpose. This means that an interpretation that concentrates all of its energies on the human author, a reconstruction of the historical context, and the like, would not particularly interest the fathers. This is not to say that they ignored these issues or considered them unimportant. In fact, from what we can tell they often consulted with Jewish exegetes to understand details of the text. They, too, were concerned with the fact that honey and oil never flowed from a rock (see Deut 32:13).⁵ They also wondered, if Moses and Aaron caused all the water of Egypt to turn to blood, how did Pharaoh's magicians find water that they could turn to blood (Exod 7:22)?⁶ Even an allegorist like Origen was meticulous with the letter of the text and warns that not every detail of Scripture has an allegorical sense.⁷ Numerous other examples of patristic historical and textual exegesis could be cited. These ancient Christian writers knew that the exegetical work was not done until the text in some way pointed to Christ, demonstrating that the text is living and active for the church of all time.

II. Christ and the Two Testaments

Since all Scripture was inspired by God and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16), then its sole purpose could not be to teach us only about the literal meaning. The fathers in general viewed Scripture as the human and the divine united in one book in the same way as they viewed Christ as human and divine united in one person.⁸ The divine exegete Christ, through his Spirit,

⁴ Origen, *On First Principles*, tr. G. W. Butterworth (London: SPCK, 1936), 285-287.

⁵ See Paterius, *Exposition of the Old and New Testament*, *Patrologia cursus completus: Series latina* (PL), 217 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844-1864), 79:781-782.

⁶ See Augustine, "Letter 143," in *Fathers of the Church*, vols. (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947-), 20:150.

⁷ Origen, *On First Principles* 273, quoted in Joseph T. Leinhard, *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (ACCS), Vol. III, ed. Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 123. "But when the passage about the equipment of the tabernacle is read, believing that the things described therein are types, some seek for ideas which they can attach to each detail that is mention in connection with the tabernacle. Now so far as concerns their belief that the tabernacle is a type of something they are not wrong. But in rightly attaching the word of Scripture to the particular idea of which the tabernacle is a type, here they sometimes fall into error."

⁸ See Origen, *On First Principles* 4, especially the first chapters. See also Athanasius, *Third Discourse Against the Arians* 29, PG 26:385A; and in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and

invested those human words with a deeper truth that, when properly understood, would point to himself. The fathers understood Christ as the exegete *par excellance* who interprets Scripture for the church through the instruction he gave to his apostles and prophets. At the same time he is also the primary *exegesis* of Scripture since, as he himself said, all Scripture testifies of him.⁹ What we today call the Nicene Creed made this a part of their confession: “. . . on the third day he rose again, *according to the Scriptures*.”¹⁰ When the fathers included these words, they were not just talking about the Gospels and 1 Corinthians 15. Their Scriptures were primarily the Old Testament inspired by the Holy Spirit “who spoke by the prophets.” With this in mind, therefore, one can better understand why the centrality of Christ was so important.

Christ is the one who brings about the unity between the Old and the New Testaments because he is the focal point, the end point, the fullness (*sensus plenior*) of Scripture to which the letter of Scripture is only a handmaid or servant. For the ancient exegetes:

there exist two successive “Testaments,” which are not primarily or even essentially two books,¹¹ but two “Economies,” two “Dispensations,” two “Covenants,” which have given birth to two peoples, to two orders, established by God one after the other in order to regulate man’s relationship with him.¹²

These two Testaments are not two books but one; the divine book which is Christ.¹³ Everything is centered in Christ and his incarnation, ultimately leading to the cross. Caesarius of Arles comments on Revelation 5, “Christ opened the book at the point when he approached the work that his father had willed, and was conceived and born. He broke its seals when he was put to death for mankind.”¹⁴ Augustine calls the Lord’s cross, “a key by

Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952–1957), 4:422–425; *On the Incarnation of the Word* 54–56, NPNF 2 4:65–66; and Athanasius, *Second Letter to Serapion* 8, PG 26:620C.

⁹ Luke 4:21; 5:43; 24:44–47; John 5:39; Acts 10:43.

¹⁰ In actuality, the Creed we confess in our divine liturgy is the result of the Council of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381), the latter of which added the phrase: “according to the Scriptures.”

¹¹ De Lubac notes: “It is in Melito of Sardis (d. 175) that the first mention of the Old Testament as a collection of books can be found. For the New Testament we have to wait for the antimontanist author who was writing around 192–193. The meaning of the expression is still being debated.” *Medieval Exegesis*, 1:425, n. 36.

¹² De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 1:227.

¹³ See De Lubac where he cites Hugh of St. Victor, *De arca Noe mor.* 2.8, PL 176:642 C; *Medieval Exegesis*, 1:433, n. 53.

¹⁴ “*quia tunc christus aperuit librum . . . humano occisus est.*” Caesarius of Arles, *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, in S. Caesarii Opera Omnia (G. Morin, 1942), 2:222.

which things that were closed were unlocked."¹⁵ Origen refers to the cross and the crucifixion as

a sacrament [which] unites the two Testaments into a single body of doctrine, intermingling the ancient precepts with the grace of the Gospel.¹⁶ . . . What the rod of Moses had accomplished figuratively by striking the rock is accomplished in very truth by a thrust of the centurion's lance. From the side pierced by the lance gushed forth the fountains of the New Testament. If Jesus had not been struck, if blood and water had not flowed from his side, all of us would still be suffering from thirst for the Word of God.¹⁷

Christ brings the Old and New Testaments into a satisfying, sacramental, cohesive wholeness. These two testaments, however, also remain distinct and at times in opposition to each another. The opposition is also a result of the advent of Christ, as the first Testament finds itself surpassed, obsolete, outdated or antiquated, if not read in conformity with the New Testament.¹⁸ Augustine referred to the Old Testament as an outline, a rough sketch, "a first draft."¹⁹ Origen describes it as a shift or transformation in which "Christ did not change their names (i.e. of Moses and the Prophets), but the way in which they were understood."²⁰ It was also, for many of them, an abrupt change,²¹ although one prepared for by the prophetic treatment of the Torah.²² The fathers nonetheless taught that the Old Testament no longer existed for the Christian except in its relationship with the New. Justin Martyr told Trypho, the Jewish rabbi, that the Jews read the Scriptures without understanding because they do not acknowledge Christ.²³

¹⁵ Augustine, *Ennarationes in Ps.* 45.1, PL 39:1378.

¹⁶ Origen, *On First Principles* 4.3.13; GCS 22:343–344. See also "Homilies on Joshua 9.4," in FC 105:99–100.

¹⁷ De Lubac 1:239–240. Origen, "Homilies on Exodus 11.2," in FC 71:356–357.

¹⁸ Although the designation Old and New Testament would formally come into use later, see De Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 1:227.

¹⁹ "Prima adumbratio," Augustine, *Sermon* 272B.1; MiAg (Morin, 1930) 1:381; WSA 3 7:304.

²⁰ Origen, *Homilies on Genesis* 13.3; GCS 29:118, "non enim christus in iis nomina, sed intelligentiam commutavit." See also FC 71:191.

²¹ The Venerable Bede, writing in the eighth century in England notes how this change affected him: "The inward anxiety of my mind 'disturbed me,' on account of the sudden introduction of the New Testament for the Old, when, instead of the books of the prophets and the law, which I knew were divine and written by the Holy Spirit, the preaching of the Gospel suddenly filled the whole world." Bede, *In Cant.* 5, PL 91:1186.

²² Cf. Augustine, *Ennarationes in Ps.* 113.4, CCL 40:1637–1638 where he speaks of "the hidden and veiled mysteries of the old books revealed in part by the old books."

²³ Justin, *Dialog with Trypho* 29.2.

There was one Jewish exegete, however, whose exegesis showed promise. Philo (15 BC–50 AD), a contemporary of Jesus and the early Paul, joined Jewish midrashic interpretation to the allegorical method derived from Stoic philosophical thought.²⁴ By doing so, he was able to bring out what he deemed the interior and profound spiritual meaning that was there inherently in the external Law. Philo was a faithful Jewish exegete, and for all we know he remained Jewish. His allegory, however, was popular among later Christian Alexandrian exegetes because it left so many openings for trinitarian and christological interpretations in the Jewish Scriptures, that he ultimately was rejected by many of the rabbis who followed him, even as he was prized by the Christians—even called “Bishop Philo” in some later catena.²⁵

A similar process was noted in the Apostle Paul who extended the meaning of the inspired Old Testament writers, just as they saw John the Baptist doing in referring to Jesus as the Lamb of God, or with Jesus in John 6 referring to himself as the manna. The fathers saw these as extended meanings of the text which did not however betray the meaning of what those Old Testament writers had written. The fathers were especially interested in St. Paul’s exegesis in Romans 7, 1 Corinthians 10, and 2 Corinthians 3 where Paul places the letter and the spirit in opposition. Romans 9–11, Galatians 4, and the entire book of Hebrews were also fertile ground for seeking out examples of allegory and typology. Paul’s exegesis in Ephesians 5:23–32 explained the otherwise inexplicable inclusion of the Song of Songs in the canon of Scripture as a metaphor for the union of Christ and the church.

Here is one example from Origen on the Apostle Paul. In 1 Corinthians 10:1–10, a favorite passage of Origen, Paul rehearses the history of Israel crossing the Red Sea, wandering in the wilderness with the rock from which they drank that followed them. Paul identifies that rock as Christ and so anything having to do with a rock was identified with Christ by

²⁴ See the work of A. Feuillet, *Jesus and His Mother*, (Petersham, MA: St. Bede’s Publications, 1984), 145–146: “The term [midrash] applies to paraphrases of Scripture aimed at edifying the faithful,” and “Midrash has its point of departure in ancient texts which it seeks to make relevant,” cited by de Margerie. See also Daniel Boyarin, *The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Advent of the Logos: or, Sophia’s Choice* (UC Berkely, unpublished).

²⁵ Mark Sheridan, *Genesis 12–50*, ACCS 2, xx, notes that Eusebius and Jerome treated Philo almost as if he were a Christian. There is even a later tradition that regarded him as a Christian bishop as is evidenced in the Catena on Genesis where he is cited as “Philo the bishop.” Bertrand De Margerie, 7 cites C. Mondesert, “Philon d’Alexandrie,” *Dictionnaire de la Bible: Supplement*, Vol. 7, (1966), col. 1289, indicating that “in the Cathedral of Le Puy, France, an old fresco represents [Philo] together with Isaiah, Hosea and Jeremiah, around a crucifixion.”

Origen and others. He then says: "Now these things [the punishments he had talked about earlier] happened to [Israel] as a warning, but they were [also] written down for our instruction upon whom the end of the ages has come" (1 Cor 10:11). Those words "for our instruction" and "the end of the ages" make clear that exegesis was not just or even primarily about the past in Paul's mind, says Origen. It was about the present moment, and the future life of Christians and the church. The Scriptures were written for us, not just the audience existing at the time it was written. With the advent of Christ and the end times, in other words, with a view to the end, the interpretation of Scripture had changed. Origen encapsulates this thought:

Do you not see how much Paul's teaching differs from the literal meaning? What the Jews supposed to be a crossing of the sea, Paul calls a Baptism; what they supposed to be a cloud, Paul asserts is the Holy Spirit. . . . Does it not seem right that we apply similarly to other passages this kind of rule which was delivered to us?²⁶

The exegetes representative of Antioch would answer: Yes and no. Yes, Scripture still has a deeper meaning, but no, you cannot apply Paul's method arbitrarily to all of Scripture. Antiochene exegetes were more restrained in their identification of Christ in Scripture, preferring a more disciplined typology in concert with the types found in the New Testament. The exegesis of Antioch interpreted Scripture in the context of what they called *theoria*, a Greek word by which was meant the contemplation of the human author and the meaning of the text for the immediate audience to whom he was speaking, thus the emphasis on the literal meaning of the text.²⁷ Many of the Antiochene exegetes such as Theodoret and Chrysostom provided a helpful corrective to the Alexandrian emphasis on allegory, which sometimes got out of hand.²⁸ Their more historical-grammatical exegesis, in some ways, is more akin to current exegetical methods, which may explain the current resurgence of interest in their exegesis.²⁹ However, someone like Theodore of Mopsuestia demonstrated the limits of such a literal approach.

²⁶ Origen, *Fifth Homily on Exodus*, cited in Mark Sheridan, ACCS 2, *Genesis* 12–50, xxvii.

²⁷ Cyril of Alexandria also used the term *theoria*, but in his mind it meant the authorial intent of the divine author and was more of a *pneumatica theoria* (spiritual contemplation).

²⁸ In Cyril's writings to Acacius, he justifies his rapprochement with the Antiochenes, Epistle 40, PG 77:196 B–D. Augustine has a very similar schema to Cyril's in the West. See, for instance, his Sermon 341 "On the Three Ways of Understanding Christ in Scripture: Symbolized by Jacob's Three Rods" in WSA 3 11:283–309.

²⁹ See, for instance, the many new translations being introduced by Robert Hill in the *Fathers of the Church* series and also St. Vladimir's Press.

Theodore, who was the teacher of Nestorius, "accepts the christological interpretation of a text only if it is applied to Christ in the New Testament in the most explicit way; he cannot be satisfied with a mere allusion."³⁰ Only Psalms 2, 8, 44, and 109 were accepted as Messianic—Psalms already accepted as messianic by Jewish interpreters. Christ had only the barest presence in the Old Testament, with most of the prophecies finding their fulfillment in the post-exilic period. In the Gospels, especially John, Theodore's literalism drove him to exclude as impossible any pronouncement of Jesus' divinity by the disciples or anyone else while Jesus was on this earth.³¹ His exegesis also reflects the Nestorian tendency to have two Christs walking around in the Gospels, one the Son of God, the other the Son of Mary, and never shall the two meet in the one person (πρόσωπον) of Christ.³² In the sixth century, at least three of the Antiochene exegetes were condemned (although with reservations) by the fifth ecumenical council. Origen was also condemned, but not so much for his exegesis as for his doctrinal views on certain issues. It was still the Alexandrian position that predominated in the East and influenced much of Western Latin and medieval exegesis as well.

³⁰ Manlio Simonetti, *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*, tr. John A. Hughes, eds. Anders Bergquist and Markus Bockmuehl (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., 1994), 70.

³¹ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 1.1.49; CSCO 4 3:53, "Therefore Nathanael, convinced by those deeds, said to him: (John 1:49) 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the king of Israel,' that is, you are the Messiah, who was already announced. The Messiah was certainly expected by them as a God to appear before everybody, as a king of Israel, even though they conceived him in a more obscure and material way. It was not possible then that the Jews knew how he was the Son of God, or the King of Israel. Evidently also Nathanael did not say he was the *Son of God* by divine generation, but by familiarity, as those men, who came to God through his virtue, were called sons of God. It was not possible that Nathanael immediately knew what we see that the apostle themselves came to know after a long time; those things that were said to him by the Lord could not be sufficient to demonstrate his other nature." See also Theodore's comments, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 7.20.27–29 (CSCO 4 3:358) on Thomas's confession of Jesus as "My Lord and my God." Thomas was simply addressing a word of praise to God who had raised Christ from the dead. See my forthcoming *Commentary on John* in the ACCS series where both of these quotes occur.

³² Cyril of Alexandria condemns such exegesis in his fourth anathema: "If anyone distributes between two person or hypostases the terms used in the evangelical and apostolic writings, whether spoken of Christ by the saints or by him about himself, and attaches some to a man thought of separately from the Word of God, and others as befitting God to the Word of God the Father alone, let him be anathema." NPNF 2 3:25; PG 76:391. Simonetti notes, that Theodore was aware of the union, but his theological presuppositions did not allow his exegesis to effect that union in a satisfactory way (73).

III. The Septuagint

A contribution to christocentric exegesis that is often overlooked is the question of what Bible the ancient church used. Their Scriptures were not primarily the Hebrew text but the Septuagint (LXX), a Greek translation of the Old Testament that was completed sometime around the third century before Christ.³³ The importance of the LXX is evident in the New Testament where a word like κύριος, a translation of the word *Yahweh*—the divine name—in the LXX, had huge christological implications in Paul's exegesis in Philippians 2:5–11, for instance, where every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is κύριος. Anyone reading the LXX would immediately associate κύριος with *Yahweh*. The LXX provided copious allusions to Christ, so much so that rabbinical scholars of the second century commissioned at least three more literal translations into Greek which are commonly indicated as Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion.

To provide but one example, the fathers, especially Jerome, preferred the rendering of Isaiah 7:14 in the LXX as παρθένος versus the Hebrew מַלְאָכָה, although many of them were aware of both and could argue christologically from either language. They understood παρθένος to mean virgin, while מַלְאָכָה indicated a young woman, not necessarily a virgin.³⁴ Thus the word the LXX chose, which fathers such as Augustine considered inspired, clearly indicated the virgin birth, whereas the Hebrew could be considered to be more ambiguous. If you check the textual apparatus of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, you will notice that Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion changed the Greek word παρθένος to ἡ νεάνις.³⁵ There are plenty of other examples where the LXX rendering led to a clearer identification with Christ than the Hebrew might, although someone like Jerome found plenty of christological references in the Hebrew as well—evidence that every translation is also an interpretation, but also further proof of the challenge the LXX posed to Jewish interpreters. We see this in

³³ The old Latin translations (*Vetus Latina*) which the fathers also used, were often based on the LXX as well. See the discussion on the origin of the LXX in Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, tr. Errol F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, rep. 1985), 49–74. There is some debate about its origins but no debate about its significance for the ancient church. Würthwein goes so far as to note that Augustine demanded Jerome use the canonical LXX for his translation rather than the Hebrew (49) since Augustine believed the LXX was the divinely inspired text. Jerome obviously did not comply.

³⁴ See the forthcoming ACCS volume on Isaiah 1–39 by Steven McKinion, which contains many of the fathers' approaches to this passage, some of which argue from the LXX others from the Hebrew, such as Jerome.

³⁵ K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1977), 685, n. 14.

Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, which took place in the early part of the second century.

IV. Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr, as his name implies, was martyred in Rome around AD 165 because of his defense of the faith, but not before he wrote two apologies, or defenses of Christianity, as well as a dialogue with a famous rabbi of the time named Trypho, whom we know to have died about AD 134. Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* is not one of those documents that would be viewed as a model for ecumenism in our day, at least by many of our contemporaries. He minces no words in telling his Jewish counterpart where he has gone wrong in his interpretation. Jewish exegetes, he says, make a theological explanation as to why an *alpha* was added to Abraham's name and a *rho* to Sarah's name (according to the LXX)³⁶ but are silent when it comes to Joshua whose name was changed by Moses from Oshea to Joshua which in Greek is Jesus (Ἰησοῦς).³⁷ They are content, in other words, to deal with the letter of the text, but not with the more important spirit of the text, which for Justin is Christ. Justin views everything that Joshua does, then, as if Jesus were doing it:

In the episode of the victory over Amalek, Christ is prefigured by the stone on which Moses leans, by the sign of the cross described by his outstretched arms (an event already exploited by Judaism, not as a sign of the cross, but as a work of God's power), and by Joshua's name that is equivalent to Jesus, a combat title (*Dial.* 90.4)

The name of Joshua is a figure of the name of Jesus. Just as Joshua led the people into the Holy Land, so also 'Jesus will bring about the return of the Diaspora of the people and will distribute the good land to each.' Joshua stopped the sun; but Jesus the eternal light, is to shine in Jerusalem. Joshua circumcised the people with a second circumcision; but that circumcision is a figure of the one Jesus effects in hearts and it is he who is the rock of the true circumcision (*Dial.* 113.1-7). Joshua's victory over Amalek is a figure of Jesus' enduring victory over the forces of evil (*Dial.* 99.8). The salvation granted to Rahab because of the scarlet cord is a symbol of the salvation granted to sinners through the blood of Christ (*Dial.* 109.4).³⁸

It was as if Justin were saying: Moses and Aaron had their day, so to speak, under the old law and priesthood. Christians could now follow the

³⁶ According to the LXX, Sara was altered to Sarra, and Abram to Abraam.

³⁷ *Dialogue with Trypho* 113. For a similar argument, see *Dialogue with Trypho* 120.4.

³⁸ De Margerie, *The Greek Fathers*, 33.

new Joshua who had entered into the promised land of the gospel.³⁹ Justin's counterparts among the Jewish interpreters have not grasped the true significance of Scripture since they ignore the deeper meaning. Justin and most early Christian interpreters equated a strictly literal interpretation as a Jewish interpretation, ultimately unworthy of a divinely inspired text. I would hazard to assert that Justin would probably offer a similar critique of today's historical-critical method of commentary.

It is not that Justin disparages the letter of the biblical text. Rather, he approaches Scripture, specifically the Torah, typologically. He tells us what he means by the word *type* in his *Dialogue with Trypho*: "Sometimes the Holy Spirit caused the visible appearing of something which was a figure (τύπος) of the future."⁴⁰ The figures or events are abundant in Justin's exegesis of the Pentateuch.⁴¹ In Genesis, for instance: the tree of life is a figure of Christ;⁴² Adam's temptation by the serpent in paradise prefigures Christ's temptation in the wilderness;⁴³ Eve is a type of Mary; Christ is the new Noah⁴⁴ who will bring us through the final destruction.

The prescribed ceremonies contained in the Torah also point towards Christ. The mystery of the Lamb that God ordained to be immolated as a Passover lamb (or Pasch) was a type of the anointed Christ: "The Pasch saved those who were in Egypt; likewise, the Blood of Christ will preserve those who believe in him."⁴⁵ The offering of wheat was a type of the bread of the thanksgiving [in the Eucharist].⁴⁶ Circumcision on the eighth day is a "figure of the true circumcision given in the name of Him Who was raised on the eighth day."⁴⁷ The Sabbath contributes in no way to one's

³⁹ Cf. Peter Damian, *Op. 32, de quadriga* 9; PL 145:559 BC; cited in de Lubac, 429, n. 94.

⁴⁰ *Dialogue with Trypho* 104.1.

⁴¹ Most of his typology can be found in the New Testament itself, especially the book of Hebrews, although he does often go beyond the New Testament examples or extends the connection.

⁴² *Dialogue with Trypho* 86.1.

⁴³ *Dialogue with Trypho* 103.6.

⁴⁴ *Dialogue with Trypho* 138.1-3. "At the flood the mystery of the world's salvation was at work. The just man Noah, together with the other persons of the flood account, namely, his wife, his three sons and their wives, made eight in number thereby symbolizing the eighth day on which our Christ was raised from the dead, that day being always implicitly the first. Christ, the first-born of all creation, has become in a new sense the head of another race, regenerated by Him, through water, through faith, and through the wood which contained the mystery of the cross, just as Noah was saved through the wood of the Ark, carried by the waters of the flood . . . and I mean that those who receive preparation through water, faith, and wood escape the judgment of God that is to come."

⁴⁵ *Dialogue with Trypho* 111.3.

⁴⁶ *Dialogue with Trypho* 90.4.

⁴⁷ *Dialogue with Trypho* 43.2; 41.4.

justification⁴⁸ but rather is a figure of the time to come when sin would stop.⁴⁹ "Taking them one by one," Justin says, "I could show that all of Moses's other prescriptions are types [τύποι], symbols, annunciations of what is to come to pass in Christ."⁵⁰ For Justin, these types of the Old Testament are like a first draft of what would ultimately be accomplished in Christ.

As De Margerie notes, these figures were not original with Justin. They were part of a tradition, some of which can already be found in the New Testament, others of which were already in use by Justin's contemporaries such as the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas*. Still, his *Dialogue with Trypho* "holds a central place in the history of typology" because "it constitutes the corpus of the principal figures, which existed before him [although] not all in one place."⁵¹ These figures would then be taken up by those who followed, such as Irenaeus who was influenced directly by Justin. Irenaeus will work out the theological implications of Justin's typology in his doctrine of recapitulation, which we will discuss next.

V. Irenaeus

Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons in the late second century, had to deal with the heresy of the Gnostics. Gnostic exegesis would pick and choose texts, taking them out of context and stringing them together sometimes like a James Joyce stream-of-consciousness novel. Scriptural truth and meaning were considered relative to the culture of the time, and there was no sense of the unity of Scripture. Names and familiar passages took on new meanings as the Gnostics would cut and paste passages and Scriptural thoughts together. Irenaeus compared their exegesis to a mosaic in which the tiles of the mosaic have been rearranged from depicting the majesty of a king to depicting a dog or a fox, although Gnostics could convince people the dog was a king.⁵² The Gnostics use the same Scriptures but the text that results has nothing to do with the original because they have no sense of the whole of Scripture, the body of "the Truth."⁵³ This "Truth" is summed up in the saving and revealing acts of

⁴⁸ *Dialogue with Trypho* 46.7.

⁴⁹ *Dialogue with Trypho* 14.2.

⁵⁰ *Dialogue with Trypho* 40.1; 42.4.

⁵¹ De Margerie, *The Greek Fathers*, 33.

⁵² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.8.1.

⁵³ As Irenaeus says: "he who possesses within himself the immutable canon of the truth that he received through Baptism will surely recognize [in the writings of the heretics] terms, expressions, and parables taken from the Scriptures. But he will not recognize the subject they originally treated. . . . On the contrary, if he will restore each of the texts to its respective place and fit them all to the body of the truth, he will expose [the fiction of the heretics] and demonstrate its inconsistency" (*Against Heresies* 1.9.4).

God from the beginning of creation to the incarnation of the Word made flesh and through the outpouring of the Spirit to the church. This divine economy, while trinitarian, is centered in Christ and in his central role as the recapitulator of all of Scripture and all of history.

Irenaeus takes this idea of recapitulation from Romans 5, where Paul contrasts the first Adam with the second Adam, who is Christ. He applies this understanding of the two Adams then to the passage that encapsulates his understanding of what recapitulation means: "And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" (Eph 1:9-10). The word *recapitulation* comes from the Greek word ἀνακεφαλαιώσις, which means to bring together under one principle (Eph 1:10). This term enunciates for Irenaeus the Father's plan to place everything, including all humanity and all of creation, as well as both the good and the bad angels, under Christ. It is a process which began at his incarnation and will culminate when Christ comes again.⁵⁴

In his *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, known as the *Epideixis*, Irenaeus portrays Christ as the new Adam in whom the history of the old Adam is repeated, although in an opposite direction. In Adam we had been created to be in the image of the Son of God; in Christ the Son of God takes humanity unto himself. As a man, Christ is all that Adam would have been had he not fallen into temptation. For those who are in Christ, they now have a new point of departure, able again to grow into that image that is the Son, an image which was always meant to be theirs but which Adam had given over to Satan in his disobedience. This is why the comparison with Adam and Christ is so prominent in the proofs he offers for the truth of the apostolic preaching.

Adam is formed from the virgin soil and Christ from the Virgin Mary. The fall takes place through the disobedience of the woman Eve, but

⁵⁴ In Irenaeus's words: "The Church, indeed, though disseminated throughout the world, even to the ends of the earth, received from the apostles and their disciples the faith in one God the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the seas and all things that are in them; and in the one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was enfleshed for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets preached the Economies, the coming, the birth from a Virgin, the passion, the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Son, Christ Jesus our Lord, and His coming from heaven in the glory of the Father to recapitulate all things, and to raise up all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord and God, Savior and King, according to the invisible Father's good pleasure, 'Every knee should bow [of those] in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess Him'" (Phil. 2:10-11), *Against Heresies* 1.10.1. See also 3.16.6.

through the obedience of the woman Mary the opportunity for restoration is made possible in Jesus; Adam is tempted in paradise, Jesus in the wilderness. Through a tree death entered into the world and through the tree of the cross life is given to us.⁵⁵ In Adam we were made slaves of the devil, but in Christ's recapitulation and victory over Satan we were freed. In Adam Satan alienated us from that image of God for which we had originally been created. In Christ, that very image is united to us as he becomes one of us, and thus Satan's plan is undone. As Athanasius would later state: For he was made man that we might be made God.⁵⁶

What becomes evident from all this is that, for Irenaeus, the initial victory of Christ is not the resurrection, but is really centered already on the incarnation. When the Word of God unites with humanity, Satan suffers the first of many defeats which culminate in the final defeat at Calvary. This defeat is testified to in the resurrection⁵⁷ and continues to be enacted by Christ through Baptism⁵⁸ and the Eucharist,⁵⁹ both of which unite us to Him in the life of the church.⁶⁰ The whole life of Christ, then, beginning with his incarnation, his active and passive obedience, and the subsequent life of the church are all part of the work of recapitulation.

There was a great degree of agreement on this point among early Christian interpreters. Ignatius of Antioch, who preceded both Justin and Irenaeus, shows the consensus on this point in his response to certain Judaizing Christians in Philadelphia. As William Weinrich notes, they were challenging any idea that could not be found in the ancient texts. Ignatius responds: "To me the ancient texts are Jesus Christ, the sacred

⁵⁵ Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, 31-34. ACW 16: 67-70.

⁵⁶ Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* 54.1

⁵⁷ Justo Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, Vol. 1, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 167.

⁵⁸ *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 3; ACW 16:49.

⁵⁹ *Against Heresies* 5.2-3 in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to AD 325*, 10 vols., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 1:527-530.

⁶⁰ Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 38; ACW 16:71-2. In the words of Irenaeus: "Great, then, was the mercy of God the Father: He sent the creative Word, who, when He came to save us, put Himself in our position, and in the same situation in which we lost life; and He loosed the prison-bonds, and His light appeared and dispelled the darkness in the prison, and He sanctified our birth and abolished death, loosing those same bonds by which we were held. And He showed forth the resurrection, becoming Himself *the first-born from the dead* [Col. 1:18] and raised in Himself prostrate man, being lifted up to the heights of heaven, at the right hand of the glory of the Father, as God had promised through the prophet saying: *I will raise up the tabernacle of David, that is fallen*, that is, the body sprung from David; and this was in truth accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ, in the triumph of our redemption, that He raise us in truth, setting us free to the Father."

archives are His cross and His death and His resurrection and the faith which is through Him."⁶¹ The Christ event was the key, the end to which all of Scripture pointed, including the Old Testament prophets. This is how a prophet such as Isaiah could be conceived of as almost a fifth Evangelist.

VI. Isaiah: The Fifth Gospel

Robert Wilken notes that when Augustine was preparing for Baptism he asked St. Ambrose what he should read in order to prepare "to receive so great a grace." Ambrose told Augustine to read Isaiah because it is in Isaiah that the gospel and the calling of the Gentiles is most clearly revealed. Although Augustine had trouble at first understanding Isaiah, saying he needed "more practice in the Lord's style of language (*In dominico eloquio*),"⁶² it was still the go-to book for Ambrose just as it was for Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch. In his book *The Fifth Gospel*,⁶³ John Sawyer documents the centrality of Isaiah in patristic thought. Jerome's Isaiah commentary says the book of Isaiah contains "all the mysteries of Christ . . . born of a virgin, worker of famous deeds and signs, who died and was buried and rose again from hell, the Saviour of all nations."⁶⁴ The following quote is a compilation of patristic quotes constructed into a Fifth Gospel narrative by Sawyer:

Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son (7:14 LXX, Vg), a rod out of the stem of Jesse (11:1). His name shall be called 'Immanuel' (7:14), 'Wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace' (9:6), Key of David (22:22), the Christ (45:1 LXX, Vg). To us a child is born (9:6). The ox knows its owner and the ass its master's crib (1:3). The gentiles will come to your light and the kings to your rising . . . they shall bring gold and incense (60:6). The idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence (19:1).⁶⁵ Behold my servant . . . in whom my soul delights (42:1). The spirit of the Lord will rest upon him, the

⁶¹ Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Philippians* 8.2, cited in William Weinrich, "Patristic Exegesis as Ecclesial and Sacramental," *CTQ* 64 (January 2000): 25. Weinrich refers the reader to *The Epistles of Saint Clement of Rome and Saint Ignatius of Antioch*, tr. James A. Kleist (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Bookshop; London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1961), 85–89.

⁶² *Confessions* 9.5.13 cited in Robert Wilken, "In Dominico Eloquentia: Learning the Lord's Style of Language," *Communio* 24 (Winter 1997): 851.

⁶³ John Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the history of Christianity*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1996).

⁶⁴ CCL 73:1 *Commentary on Isaiah*, Prologue.

⁶⁵ "A detail of the story not in the Gospels but familiar to Christians from the ninth century on: cf. Schiller, *Iconography*, I, pp. 117f.; BP p. 59." Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel*, 49, n. 29.

spirit of wisdom and understanding . . . (11:2). By the way of the sea, beyond Jordan and Galilee of the nations (9:1), the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor . . . (61:1). Surely he has taken our infirmities and borne our sicknesses (53:4). Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened . . . then shall the lame man leap like a hart (35:5–6). The glory of the Lord is risen upon you (60:1). He shall be a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation (28:16), but also a stone of offence and rock of stumbling to both the houses of Israel (8:14). He said, "Go and tell this people, 'Hear indeed, but understand not . . .'" (6:9).

I will weep bitterly . . . because of the destruction of the daughter of my people (that is, Jerusalem 22:4). Say to the daughter of Zion, Your savior comes (62:11 LXX, Vg). My house will be called a house of prayer for all people (56:7). My servants shall eat but you shall be hungry, my servants shall drink but you shall be thirsty . . . (65:13). Lo everyone that thirst, come to the waters . . . (55:1). He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter (53:7). The government (that is the cross bearing the inscription 'King of the Jews' on it) shall be upon his shoulder (9:6), and there shall come up briars and thorns [indicating the crown of thorns on his head] (5:6). I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to those that pluck out the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting (50:6). He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities (53:5). From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness, but bruises and sores and bleeding wounds (1:6). He was numbered between the transgressors . . . and made intercession for the transgressors (53:12). They made his grave . . . with a rich man (53:9). His tomb will be glorious (11:10 Vg). Now I will arise, says the Lord, now I will lift myself up, now I will be exalted (33:10). Then shall your light break forth like the dawn (58:8). Seek the Lord while he may be found (55:6). Behold my servant shall understand, he shall be exalted and lifted up (52:13 LXX, Vg); he shall be high and lifted up (6:1) I will set a sign among them . . . I will send survivors to the nations, to the sea, to Africa and Lydia, to Italy and Greece, to islands afar off, to those who have not heard about me and have not seen my glory; and they will proclaim my glory to the nations (66:10).⁶⁶

This is the Gospel according to Isaiah. It is amazing how complete the story of Christ is in Isaiah, according to the fathers, tracing his birth, life,

⁶⁶ Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel*, 49–50. Sawyer provides the actual narrative of the Gospels that can be gleaned from the Fathers which one might find climaxed and encapsulated in Isidore of Seville's (c. 560–636) *Ysaye Testimonia de Christo Domino* or the *Biblia Pauperum*. This quote is from Sawyer, but if you go to patristic sources such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, Cyril, etc. and especially to Isidore's commentary on Isaiah or the *Biblia Pauperum* the references to the texts can be found.

miracles, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, including his call at the end to make disciples, and a few extra details not recorded in the Gospels but taken up, among other places, in the Christmas hymnody.⁶⁷ These were the Scriptures that the exegete Christ said pointed to him. When the ancient church saw these connections and interpreted them for their flocks, they were exercising the same pastoral exegesis of their own chief shepherd.

VII. Pastoral Exegesis

The fathers exercised a pastoral interpretation that is the result of God's revelation of himself in the incarnate Jesus Christ, which provides a theological, ecclesiastical, liturgical, and above all a christocentric understanding and application of the text. Were their allegories excessive? At times, yes, no doubt. And, just because the ancient church did something does not mean we should do it. Luther's critique of the allegorical method and the four-fold *quadriga* of meanings still stands. However, Luther still read the fathers and often quoted the fathers because he, too, was a christocentric exegete, although not as exclusively as some in the ancient church.⁶⁸

Joseph Lienhard makes a helpful distinction on how to view patristic interpretation in his introduction to the ACCS commentary on Exodus through Deuteronomy. He first of all notes that, for the patristic writers, the categories of allegorical exegesis and literal interpretation "are not particularly useful descriptions of the real dynamics of their reading . . . both Alexandrians and Antiochenes understood that an exclusively literal interpretation is impossible, if only because the Old Testament required a christological hermeneutic."⁶⁹ But in the end, their concern was not primarily methodological. "'Methodology' quotes Henri de Lubac, 'is a

⁶⁷ Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel*, 50. Some added details, like the shattering of the idols in Egypt, or the ox and ass in the nativity scene, are not in the narrative but made it into much of Christmas hymnody (cf. "Away in a Manger," "Good Christian Men Rejoice," etc.). Some of the connections are more obvious than others; other connections are based on the Latin or Greek versions of Isaiah. The selections included in the quotation above were drawn directly from the Fathers, but many others include references to the treachery of Judas (3:8-11), and Jesus's suffering in Gethsemane (33:7). The imagery of the winepress (63:1-3), though more indirect, could have also been included but were not.

⁶⁸ For a comparison of Luther's exegesis with that of patristic and medieval (mainly medieval) exegesis, see Scott Hendrix, "Luther Against the Background of the History of Biblical Interpretation," *Interpretation* 37 (July 1983): 229-239. He shows that Luther, despite his protestations, "never gave up the use of allegory [although] he sharply restricted its application after 1519 and carefully defined its meaning" (231).

⁶⁹ Lienhard xxvii.

modern invention. In the first centuries of the Church, those who explained the Scriptures entrusted themselves to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, without concerning themselves with a preplanned methodology."⁷⁰ This is not to say that methodology is not important, but for patristic commentators, it was simply not the primary concern.⁷¹ Remember that the ancient church was not commenting on Scripture for the academy.

This is not offered as a critique of academic commentaries, which often use methods formulated in the eighteenth century. Contemporary exegetes have many insights and advantages in scholarship to bring to the text that the ancient church just did not have. However, the ancient church also had some insights we need to recover. They were pastors, bishops, monks, and deacons. The parish, and not just the academy, was their life. They not only administered the sacraments in the divine liturgy and preached every Sunday, many preached every day, and their concordance was in their head. They had a synthetic view of Scripture that often focused on the one divine author. They would often make the point that if all a listener wanted to learn was the literal sense of the text, they could probably learn that better from the Jewish rabbis. Their vocation, however, was to point people to Christ.

Their exegesis was also in service to the church's liturgical and sacramental life, which developed at the same time as patristic exegesis. Just to illustrate, consider the Eucharist in the *Didache*. This second-century document, which contains some of the earliest liturgical texts outside the New Testament, states:

Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks as follows: First, concerning the cup: "We give you thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of David your servant, which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever." And concerning the broken bread: "We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever. Just as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and then was gathered together and became one, so may your church be

⁷⁰ Lienhard, xxviii, n. 41. He references J. Brisson, in *Geist aus der Geschichte: Das Schriftverständnis des Origenes*, tr. Hans Urs von Balthasar (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Johannes Verlag, 1968), 171, n.9.

⁷¹ Granted, Irenaeus argues over methodology with the Gnostics and Cyril does the same with Nestorius and Theodore. And so, this quote by Brisson is debatable. But the sense of their exegesis seems to favor a sense of faith and inspiration over against methodology.

gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever."⁷²

Note the connections of Christ's blood line with the vine of David, the bread which is his body associated not only with the body broken on the cross and the Eucharist, but also with the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, the gathering of the bread by the apostles, as they did after the miracle, who now gather together the church into the unity of Christ celebrated in the Eucharist. In fact, the whole action of Christ in fulfilling the Scriptures and conferring on them, at the same time, the fullness of their meaning is compared by Christian tradition to the act of Eucharistic consecration. For the fathers, Scripture is bread, but this bread does not become living food until it has been consecrated by Jesus. Rupert of Deutz, who is outside the patristic period, nonetheless helps summarize this point:

Therefore, it was then that the Lord Jesus took the bread of Scripture in his hands, at the point when, having become incarnate according to the Scriptures, he suffered and rose; at that point, I say, he took the bread and gave thanks, when, to fulfill the Scriptures, he offered himself up to the Father as a sacrifice of grace and truth.⁷³

Similar examples could be found in the liturgies of St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom in the East, or the hymns of Ambrose in the West. Such examples are with us even now. The addition of the *Gloria Patri* at the end of Psalms and Introits was a theological statement identifying those Psalms as Christian, a practice we still observe. Much of their liturgy and exegesis continues to inform our worship life today. "This is the Feast," "Let the Vineyards be Fruitful," the *Agnus Dei*, and the prefaces for Communion all take for granted a deeper, christological understanding in their interpretation of the text. A hymn like "The Tree of Life" looks as though it came straight out of Justin Martyr or Irenaeus.

Robert Wilken notes that when Exodus 14, the deliverance through the Red Sea, was read at the Easter Vigil, as it is still today, it invited a typological interpretation with reference to Baptism. The exodus from Egypt is not simply deliverance from bondage to slavery, it is also redemption from the power of sin. Going down into the waters of Baptism is understood as a new Exodus. In the Liturgy of the Hours, the Psalms are often prefaced by a brief passage from the New Testament or a phrase from one of the church fathers. At Daytime Prayer on Thursday of Week

⁷² *Didache* 9; *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2nd ed., tr. J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, ed. Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992), 259-261.

⁷³ Rupert of Deutz, In John 6; PL 169:443 BD; cited in de Lubac, 241.

II, for example, before Psalm 57 stand the words of St. Augustine: "This psalm tells of our Lord's passion." At Morning Prayer on Thursday of Week I, the city of Jerusalem in Psalm 48 is interpreted as the church, the "holy city built of living stones."⁷⁴

VIII. Conclusion

The persistence of typological and allegorical exegesis of the Bible in the church's worship makes the recovery of patristic and medieval exegesis a matter of some urgency, continues Wilken.⁷⁵ If one's approach to the Scriptures is solely historical, that is, if each book of the Bible, and individual passages within a book, are understood primarily by reference to those to whom the text was first addressed, the interpretation of the Bible as presented in the church's worship can only appear arbitrary or capricious. It will not speak to the person in the pew. That exegesis will satisfy the demands of the academy while the exegetical needs of the church languish. But neither Wilken nor I are talking about a repristination of the fathers' exegesis—just a reincorporation that includes their insights, their superior grasp of the unity of Scripture amid what has become in some circles an increasingly fragmented and sometimes esoteric exegesis.

Christ was not the fathers' only interest in their interpretation of Scripture. He was, however, their prime interest and the focal point of their exegesis. They also believed one could not discern this without the gift of the Spirit, a gift which comes through prayer.⁷⁶ Patristic exegesis was christocentric exegesis because it was exegesis done in faith, exegesis done in service to the church, and exegesis done with a view to the end,

⁷⁴ Wilken, *In dominico eloquio*, 849–850.

⁷⁵ Wilken, *In dominico eloquio*, 849–850.

⁷⁶ See Origen *Homilies on Genesis* 12.1 (FC 71:176). "If the Lord should see fit to illuminate us by your prayers, we will attempt to make known a few things which pertain to the edification of the church;" Origen, *Homilies on Exodus* 9.2 (FC 71:337).

end that is Christ and that Christ is also bringing when he recapitulates all things in himself at the end of all things.