

Class 4: Methods in Biblical Theology

Saturday, February 1, 2014

6:06 PM

- Review from last week
- Objectives:
 - ♦ What are three dimensions of the text we need to keep in mind?
 - ♦ What is typology and how do we use it?
- Kid Objectives
 - ♦ What is theology? (Studying God in the Bible)
 - ♦ Who is the center of the Bible? (Jesus is the center of the Bible)
 - ♦ What is the gospel? (The story of Jesus and how it applies to me)
 - ♦ What is a way to remember the gospel? (God, man, Christ, response)
 - ♦ What is typology? (A picture in history that points us to Christ)
- Three Aspects/Dimensions of the Text
 - ♦ Question: We have discussed the gospel as our connection to the whole Bible, but, on the other hand, what are some things that separate us from the text especially the Old Testament?
 - ♦ History
 - Question: How does history separate us from the text?
 - **Draw History**
 - Question: If the Bible is history how do we need to read it?
 - Implication: We must read the Bible in light of the passage's historical position
 - ✧ One thought: must have an academic, extra-biblical knowledge of history to read the Bible well - interact - this may be helpful at times but is not necessary and may be dangerous - why?
 - ✧ Another thought: must have a good knowledge of the history in the Bible and how it is portrayed by God
 - ✧ Example: the book of Ruth must be understood in its historical position against the backdrop of Judges and a prelude to the crowning of David as King
 - Implication: We must read history in light of its purpose
 - ✧ The historian writes selectively according to his purpose
 - ✧ So how the history is recorded is important - what details did the author record, what details did he not record?
 - ✧ Example: Judges is not an "academic" history - it records a lists of deliverers culminating in a call for a king indicating that Israel needs a better deliverer - a king who will rule
 - (Goldsworthy, According to Plan) *Understanding the Bible means understanding the historical story within which the message of the Bible is unfolded.*
 - ♦ Literature
 - Question: how does literature separate us from the text?
 - Question: what do we mean that the Bible is literature?
 - ✧ We mean that the Bible was written by men using language in forms understandable to them to communicate things - the words are important and the way the words are used is important, just as with any book you would read
 - ✧ (Goldsworthy, According to Plan) *At the first level the problem of understanding the Bible is the same as that of understanding any literature. How words are used is a matter of prime importance. Jesus used words in a variety of ways, and the biblical record as a whole uses words in an equally diverse manner.*
 - Question: what are different types of literature in the Bible?
 - ✧ historical narrative, law and statutes, prophetic oracles, genealogies,
 - ✧ songs, taunts, parables and fables, riddles, wisdom sayings/proverbs
 - ✧ instructional wisdom, hymns of praise, thanksgivings, laments, etc.

- Question: If the Bible is literature how do we need to read it?
- Implication: We must read the Bible according to its literary features
 - ✧ One thought: must have an academic knowledge of literature to read the Bible well - interact - this may be helpful at times but is not necessary and may be dangerous - why?
 - ✧ Another thought: (Goldsworthy, Gospel and Kingdom) *We do not have to become experts in ancient literary types in order to avoid the pitfalls. But we should at least try to become more familiar with them and understand how they function.*
 - ✧ (Goldsworthy, According to Plan) *Part of our exegesis is discerning how narrative, parable, hymn, legal precept and apocalyptic vision, to name but a few, all use words in different ways to communicate the truth of God.*
 - ✧ Two examples: Proverbs and Apocalyptic literature
- (Goldsworthy, According to Plan) *Understanding the Bible means understanding the words that the biblical authors used in the way they intended them to be understood.*
- ◆ Revelation:
 - Question: how does revelation separate us from the text?
 - Question: what do we mean that the Bible is revelation?
 - ✧ In each part of the Bible God is revealing Himself
 - ✧ At each stage of the Biblical History God is truly revealing Himself
 - ✧ But the revelation of Himself is not complete until the revelation of Christ
 - ✧ So all of the Bible is real revelation, but the full revelation is not seen until Christ
 - ✧ We often call this principle 'progressive revelation'
 - ✧ Progressive revelation avoids two pitfalls - first we could say that what previous generations understood about God doesn't matter because God wasn't truly revealed to them - second we could say that what previous generations understood about God must be exactly the same as what we understand - but against both of these, progressive revelation understands revelation at all points in history to be real (as understood by those who received it) but also to be incomplete until Christ
 - Implication: We must read the Bible according to what had been and has been revealed. That is, we must be cognitive of progressive revelation.
 - ✧ When we read through the Old Testament, we shouldn't automatically read New Testament truths into the text
 - ✧ WAIT, WHAT AM I SAYING?? - I JUST SAID WE NEED TO SEE THE GOSPEL IN ALL OF THE BIBLE???
 - ✧ What I mean is that seeing the gospel in all of the Bible is not a foreign application of the gospel into the text, we don't read the gospel into the text however we want to
 - ✧ Instead, we start by thinking about where in history the text you're reading is
 - ✧ Then you think about what the people of that day understood about the text based on previous and contemporary revelation
 - ✧ Then you understand how God is revealing truths about His redemptive plan to them
 - ✧ All of this happens based on what HAD been revealed
 - ✧ Only then do you start to look at how these same topics are repeated through the Bible and find their culmination in Christ
 - ✧ When you see how these things find their culmination in Christ, then you can understand how these things teach us about Christ
 - ✧ So this is based on what HAS been revealed
 - ✧ We need to keep both in mind, what had been and what has been revealed to understand the Bible rightly
 - (Goldsworthy, According to Plan) *Understanding the Bible means understanding the way words and history are used to reveal the truth about God and his redeeming activity.*

- One Overarching Method: Typology

- ♦ Question: What is typology?

- Best explained by contrasting it with two other prevalent systems of reading the Bible
- Analogy/Literalism (continuum)
- Analogy assumes that the history of the Bible is unimportant, we don't interact with what really happened
- Literalism assumes that the progressive revelation of the Bible is not important, we don't need to see any growth or supersession of ideas and revelation throughout the Bible
- Typology, against both of these, takes history and progressive revelation seriously
- Typology is a repetitive pattern in history ordained and recorded by God that teaches an integral truth about God's redemption with each iteration expanding our understanding of the truth until it reaches its fulfillment in Christ. So typology is both continuous (repetitive pattern) and discontinuous (fulfillment/antitype).
 - ✧ Repetitive pattern - something that happens multiple times with clear indications of similarity
 - ✧ Integral truth - the meaning of the pattern is integrally related to history unlike allegory
 - ✧ Expanding our understanding - each repeat in the pattern is not identical because each repeat adds to our understanding of the truth that the type is pointing to
 - ✧ Fulfillment - in Christ, the pattern is fulfilled. Thus Christ must be in some way related to each of the types, but also must be substantially different than they types. He is the antitype not a continuation of the types but the fulfilment of the types. He must be integrally connected to the types, but also qualitatively different than they types. The types represent what Christ is.
- Kids: Typology is a picture in history that points us to Christ
- Typology, unlike analogy, takes history seriously, the truth obtained from the passage must be integrally associated with the history involved, it cannot be blindly and arbitrarily assigned
- Typology, unlike literalism, takes progressive revelation seriously, the truth obtained from the passage must grow and metamorph until it finds its true fulfillment in the antitype, Christ
- So typology can 'bridge the gap' between us and the Old Testament without denying any of the basic dimensions of the text we discussed above
- (Goldsworthy, According to Plan) *Progressive revelation establishes the principle of typology. While the underlying relationship remains the same, the form in which it is given undergoes a certain development or expansion until the fulfillment is reached... Through stages, the type is progressively clarified. The fulfillment of all this is referred to as the antitype.... Typology, then, takes account of the fact that God used a particular part of human history to reveal himself and his purposes to mankind. But it was a process, so that the historical types are incomplete revelations and depend on their antitype for their real meaning. Typology rejects the principle of literalism. The meaning of history, far from being self-evident, depends on revelation for its meaning. It also rejects the principle of allegorism. History, far from being meaningless, is controlled and interpreted by God in revelation. Typology assumes that all history is God's history, and that God has used a particular part of history along with his word to reveal himself to mankind. The New Testament recognizes the principle of typology in the fact that Christ fulfills the Old Testament promises in ways that differ from the actual terms of the promises. Typology is also established while literalism is rejected in the idea that the Old Testament revelation is only a shadow of the solid reality revealed in Christ.*

- ♦ Question: Why typology?

- Because typology fits History, Literature, Revelation
 - ✧ If we need to interact and understand each of these dimensions of the Bible, then typology is the interpretative mechanism that allows us to be true to all three dimensions at the same time
 - ✧ Other interpretative schemes tend to obscure, overlook or even deny one or more of the dimensions of the text
- Because typology is how the Bible understands itself: Goldsworthy: "Reading Bible on own terms"
 - ✧ The New Testament explicitly refers to the Old Testament as types often:
 - ✧ Romans 5:14, Colossians 2:17, Hebrews 8:5, Hebrews 10:1
 - ✧ But, far beyond explicit references, the whole of revelation calls us to see types - this is what I am going to try to illustrate during our next class as we start to develop a 'whole-bible' theology, it is going to be based on the concept of typology, these repetitive historical patterns

- ♦ Question: How pervasive is typology? Is typology related to specific individuals in the Bible? If not, how much of the Bible is understood using the interpretative mechanism of typology?
 - As we come to the Bible and see how the Old Testament portrays itself and how the New Testament relates to the Old Testament, I think we can use typology to understand more than individual characters in the Bible
 - In fact, we can relate to whole sections of the Bible, primarily the Old Testament, as typological in nature, which is what we are going to start to develop next week - how does the Old Testament relate to us in Christ, it is an extended typology that points us to Christ
 - Far from denying the truth of the text, this is the only interpretative scheme that truly honors the text in all of its dimensions because typology takes seriously the history, takes seriously the literature and takes seriously the progressive revelation in history recorded in the Old and New Testaments
 - (Goldsworthy, Christ-centered Biblical Theology) *Some definitions of typology limit its scope; others broaden it. There is a general consensus that typology exists, and that it involves events, people and institutions in the Old Testament that prefigure aspects of the New Testament's teaching about Jesus Christ. For some biblical theologians typology exists as little more than literary fictional devices to make religious points. For others typology exists as God-given revelations that are a part of real history and foreshadow the central event of real world history... The macro-typology I propose is a way of showing the comprehensive nature of the fulfilment of God's promises in Christ. When we allow the Old Testament categories to expand to their full potential, antitype is shown to be broader than the mere fulfilment of certain explicit types and promises. Biblical theological study of the events, people and institutions provides us with a comprehensive view of reality and God's part in it. On this view, typology has regard for the full scope of God's redemptive work in that salvation means that he restores everything that was lost or marred by the Fall. According to Paul's take on Genesis 3, this involves the entire creation (Rom. 8:18-23). It was also Paul who declared the resurrection to be the locus of fulfilment of all God's promises (Acts 13:32-33). Paul's cosmic Christology, especially in Colossians 1:15-20 and in Ephesians 1:10, would appear to present a view that God has drawn all things together in Christ through whom and for whom all things were created... The summing up of all things in Christ (Eph. 1:10) is, in my view, integral to typology... That is, typology is not restricted to certain key people, events and institutions that are prominent in the salvation history of the Bible, but rather the whole first stage is typological of the coming of Christ. The whole prophetic perspective of the Day of the Lord is also typological and confirms the typology of the revelation in Biblical history... There is no aspect of reality that is not included in this biblical view. There is no aspect of reality that is not involved in the person and work of Christ.*