

INTERACTION WITH PETER ENNS

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I. *Introduction*

First, my sincere thanks go to Professor Enns for both correcting me in my response to his argument regarding 2 Cor 6:2 and in prompting me to think and to express myself more clearly on many other matters in our interchange. Second, I do not doubt that Enns intends to stay true to the Westminster Standards. The question is, “Does he?”

Third, apparently I put more weight on logic than does Enns. True, it remains an *a priori* of mine that doctrine is based on the conviction that God does not contradict himself; speak nonsense; represent as ostensive fact on the plot level (i.e., the human author’s representation of the event) what in fact is fiction on the story (i.e., “the event”) level; and other human “mistakes.” Admittedly, I am not a professional systematic theologian nor a scholar of the Westminster Standards in particular, but if the Westminster divines thought that Scripture contains what is commonly understood as human error, why would they and how could they have defined God with respect to his revelation in Holy Scripture as “truth itself” (WCF 1.4)?

Finally, my concerns in this essay are twofold: to clarify the distinction between theological assumptions and exegetical method, and to clarify my exegesis of passages that Enns uses to derive his model of inspiration. Since the former is at the heart of Enns’s response, I address this important distinction in Part I. I address my second concern in Part II.

“Tensions,” the balancing of opposing truths that prompt one to extend understanding to embrace both, do not trouble me. Paradoxes mirror the messiness of life and are the grist for profitable theological reflection. The Semites have a saying, with which I tend to agree: “You do not have truth until you have paradox.” Like most people, I seek to resolve tensions with the same unflinching honesty as Enns, while admitting that the finite mind can never come to infinite truth. But Enns’s approach generates tensions between the inspiration of the Bible by an inerrant Source and human foibles such as contradictions, mistaken teachings, semantic impertinence, and doctrines based on Qumran *peshar* and on sharp but inappropriate and unaccredited exegesis that is called *pilpul* in Talmudic hermeneutics. In Enns’s response he does not correct my statements that his book implies these foibles.

Admittedly, psychologically I would rather not upset my assumptions, but if I am persuaded they are wrong I will move—literally, as in the case of my leaving

Dallas Seminary for Westminster. In my book *An Old Testament Theology* [hereafter *AOTT*] I resolve the tensions between biblical cosmology and science partly by the theory of theistic evolution; I remain *open* to multiple authors of Isaiah; I accept an exilic date for the *final* edition of Deuteronomy; and other matters. Evangelicals have commonly denounced these notions. Evangelical traditions do not hobble my thinking. While teaching at Westminster, I expressed to students that I had no resolution to the tension between Exod 6:3 and Genesis with respect to the revelation of the divine name. I lived with that tension for forty-five years, and it was not until I was sixty-five years of age that I was able to extend my thought to resolve it (see *AOTT*, pp. 361-62, 367-69). In the interim I rejected cheap harmonizations and *silly* Midrash *pilpul* hermeneutics. Likewise, I do not accept Enns's resolution of the tension by conceding the necessity of accepting what most regard as human error. When I encounter contradiction in a good writer, not just in the Bible, I retrace my steps to see where I went wrong in my interpretation. I do not go on feeling comfortable with nonsense. The problem becomes acute when one accepts the assumption, as Enns and I both sincerely profess, of the Bible's inerrant Source who inspired many human authors to produce an infallible text.

Enns's model of incarnation theology includes the human author's mistakes of varying sorts and degrees in conjunction with inspiration by an inerrant Author. I suggest that Enns lives comfortably with this unstable conjunction between divine inerrancy and human error of varying sorts and degrees by not defining precisely what divine inspiration entails. Enns thinks his model stabilizes his students' faith; I do not, though I am not doubting his most sincere motive.

Logical contradiction forces me either to change my assumptions about the nature of inspiration, which I inherited from B. B. Warfield, or to suspend judgment as I sometimes do, but always with the intention to re-examine the datum that challenges my assumptions. In this essay I aim to re-examine the disputed texts on which Enns constructs his resolution.

That leads me to segue into the appropriate method of re-examining his data. Enns and I both agree that rigorous exegesis must defend his interpretation of the crucial texts cited in *I&I*. By "rigorous exegesis" we both mean interpreting the philology of the Bible, while being sensitive to its historical conditioning. To be sure, *a priori* assumptions play a role in what an exegete may think is objective, and I should have said so clearly, not assumed it. But having addressed this tension between assumption and exegesis, in *AOTT* (p. 88), I drew the discussion to this conclusion: "Agnosticism about meaning is inappropriate because we can spiral out of our own historical conditioning . . . by the grammatico-historical method to sufficient certainty. . . . The perspicuity of Scripture is not absolute but it is sufficient." Enns rightly thinks that he can achieve sufficient clarity through rigorous exegesis to defend his model of inspiration. We differ on whether his exegesis survives the test of that fire.

I reluctantly challenged Enns's claim from the data I have in hand that rigorous exegesis can lead to no other conclusion than his interpretation of the entailments of the incarnational model. But I felt the responsibility to challenge

his exegesis and conclusion because students, who often are incapable of rigorous exegesis, tend to trust their professor's exegesis as authoritative. The professor has the responsibility to lay out before his students the relevant and crucial data that lead him or her to draw a conclusion while appraising critically other solutions. Since Enns did not do this, I aimed in my response to present the neglected, contrary data. In that essay and in this one I research the disputed texts only to the extent necessary to draw his model into question.

Had Enns *emphasized* the tentativeness of his model, as he does in his conclusion to *I&I*, I would not have felt my responsibility so acutely. But *I&I* gives the appearance of certainty, and in his interchange the author clearly asserts that his rigorous exegesis allows him no other option than his model. How could one be certain of a model if other interpretive options were not explored? My thesis is this: Every text on which Enns's model of inspiration depends is open to other viable interpretations.

To achieve clarity in this essay I will restrict my response exclusively to exegetical concerns and ignore other matters in his interchange that in my view obfuscate the discussion and demand separate treatments. The community of faith must judge for itself the validity of our arguments.

With regard to progressive revelation, which Enns raises in his introduction, *AOTT* is based on the assumption of the progressive revelation of divine matters through historical contingency. Against most orthodox theologies, I do not capitalize "spirit" with respect to God's spirit in the OT because my exegesis leads me to conclude that God's spirit as represented in the OT is an aspect of his being, like the human spirit, not a hypostasis of his Being as represented in the NT.

With respect to the question of many gods or one God, we must clearly distinguish two types of progressive revelation. The type I favor is expressed in the saying, "The more it changes the more it becomes what it was," as in the building of a bridge which progresses from a single span to its full form. So, in the case before us, and I think Enns would agree with me, I believe that God is originally represented as one and later texts qualify that this one God is a tri-unity, like three notes in a musical chord, each note being of the same substance and yet composing a unity. The other type of progressive revelation, which Enns accepts and I do not, is that later revelation negates or invalidates the earlier because the earlier is false.¹ So, Enns contends that earlier texts present as truth that there are other gods, whereas later texts teach that there are no other gods. If an inerrant Source of both texts and these representations of infallible truth contain that sort of contradiction, the Source is confused and infallible truth is nonsense ("no sense").

My review of *I&I* offered another explanation of the phenomena by distinguishing between theological statements that there is no other god and religious commands that forbid the worship of other gods, the products of depraved

¹ For a sophisticated argument that the whole of the HB can be read in accordance with early Jewish monotheism, see Richard Bauckham, "Biblical Theology and the Problem of Monotheism," in *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Craig Bartholomew et al.; Scripture and Hermeneutics 5; Zondervan, 2004), 187-232.

human imagination. My interpretation is the same as that of Paul in 1 Cor 8, but I came to this resolution before I thought of Paul's reasoning.

I now turn to the data itself and challenge Enns's conclusions. There are two sets of issues. Concerning the disputed texts discussed in Part II, which pertains to the First Temple era, I argue they are not contradictory and/or arbitrary. With respect to Part III, which pertains to the Second Temple era, I only call Enns's exegesis into question, in spite of my realization that I am not as professionally studied as he in this literature.

My challenges below will first summarize my original argument, then summarize Enns's interaction, and finally present a conclusion to clarify my position, which, as Enns says, is the purpose of this exercise.

II. *The Old Testament and Theological Diversity*

1. *Diversity in Wisdom Literature*

1. *Proverbs*

Waltke Proverbs 26:4a and 5a, "Do not answer a fool according to his folly," and "Answer a fool according to his folly" are universally true when one considers the rationale given for the commands in 26:4b and 5b, namely, answer the substance of the fool's argument, but do not use his style.

Enns Enns appeals to the opinion of the majority and alleges that I reject the situational nature of proverbs and diversity.

Clarification Unfortunately, this text is first on the agenda. I say unfortunate because Enns ignores my exegetical point, which is my only concern in this portion of my essay. I address the issue in more detail in *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15–31* (2005). Enns kindly commends my commentary but does not interact with what it says about this disputed passage. Perhaps he did not respond to the exegesis because we both agree that different interpretations of this passage do not really affect our understanding of the entailments of the incarnational model of inspiration. Finally, a universal truth can be misused if misapplied.

2. *Ecclesiastes*

Waltke Basing my understanding on Prov 10:2; 24:16; Eccl 3:15-17, I argued that there is no contradiction between Proverbs and Ecclesiastes with regard to the ultimate value of wisdom. Both teach that "wisdom"—a co-referential term for "righteousness"—is always rewarded, not necessarily immediately, if the student keeps the end in view, an end that includes an afterlife.

Enns Enns agrees with me that Proverbs sets out to describe "the end of the matter," "in that," as he says so well, "we read here of the ultimate pattern of the social order . . . where ultimately in the end the righteous rise." But, Enns insists, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes "have a very different take on the ultimate efficacy of wisdom." He alleges, "Where we differ is the degree to which we are comfortable with theological tensions on the pages of Scripture." He also alleges, "None of the passages Waltke adduces demonstrate in the slightest

Qohelet's ultimate faith perspective." And, "It [the opinion Enns is espousing] stems from what I hope is a rigorous assessment of the exegetical evidence in conversation with the larger scholarly developments."

Clarification Since we have clarified that Proverbs has in view the ultimate righteous pattern of the social order, no further clarification on that score is needed. With regard to Ecclesiastes, I agree that Proverbs and Ecclesiastes "have a very different take on the ultimate efficacy of wisdom." I know of no one who disagrees with this assessment of the book, at least with respect to observing life "under the sun." We differ, however, whether rigorous exegesis leads to the conclusion that Qoheleth has faith in God's justice that transcends viewing the reality of injustice under the sun. Perhaps we do differ as "to the degree to which we are comfortable with theological tensions on the pages of Scripture," but I honestly do not think so. In my judgment, Enns minimizes what I regard as contradictions by labeling them "tensions." This issue is important to our interaction, for we both assume that God is Author of both books. We can either say that: (1) Qoheleth does not speak certain truth, as Enns and Longman allege, (2) God contradicts himself, as many liberals allege, or (3) seek another resolution.

We presumably agree that a proper resolution depends on an holistic interpretation of Ecclesiastes. To show that Qohelet teaches ultimate justice I restricted my response to citing only Eccl 3:17, because Enns did not cite it, even though it is part of the passage he uses to show that Qohelet does not believe in God's justice. There are other passages as well to make my point, for example, "Although a wicked person who commits a hundred crimes may live a long time, I know that it will go better with those who fear God, who are reverent before him. Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow" (Eccl 8:12). I suggest that we will reach a resolution more quickly if we actually address these texts that support my model, which I myself am testing, instead of *dogmatically* asserting that no text supports my model and that rigorous exegesis supports his. Enns rightly acknowledges more research is needed. May I suggest that to clarify my position more fully some may find helpful chapter 13, "The Gift of Wisdom: Ecclesiastes," in *AOTT*.

3. Job

Waltke It is not true that *anyone well versed in Old Testament teaching would likely have drawn the same conclusion [as Job's three friends]*, as can be seen in the stories of Cain and Abel, famine in the promised land after Abraham set out by faith to go there, Joseph's sufferings in Egypt, and numerous other examples.

Enns "But this example [Cain and Abel] take us too far afield. My appeal was to the blessing and curses in Deut 28, that is, explicit passages rather than narrative examples that give at best indirect teaching. In such didactic passages, it is invariably the case that behavior will result in either blessing or curses."

Clarification Since Enns appealed to the OT, not just Deut 28, I felt at liberty to use texts outside of Deuteronomy to call his allegation into question.

Here I restrict myself to the Deuteronomic material. Theonomists treat *Torah* (“catechetical teaching”) too simplistically, restricting it to the Mosaic material. Probably Enns and I agree that the book of Deuteronomy is part of the larger *narrative* of the Deuteronomistic history, which extends from Deuteronomy to 2 Kings, apart from Ruth (cf. Deut 1:1-5; 34:1-12). If so, the full scope of that narrative Torah qualifies Moses’ three addresses in the book of Deuteronomy. Moses forbade intermarriage with the Canaanites, but the Deuteronomistic history shows that he did not have in mind a Canaanite woman like Rahab, who by her faith is brought into the covenant community. Moses exacts capital punishment for murder and adultery, but the Deuteronomistic history shows that God did not exact capital punishment in the case of David and Bathsheba, because Moses did not address the qualification of repentance. Likewise, the Deuteronomistic history shows repeatedly that God did not execute blessings and curses mechanically. Though judged as evil-doing by the Deuteronomist, Jehoash was victorious over the Arameans after he confessed that the prophet is the true source of Israel’s protection and security (2 Kgs 13:10-17), and Jeroboam II expanded the kingdom almost to the dimensions of the Davidic empire, even though the Deuteronomist evaluates him as evil. According to the full theology of the Torah narrative, the conditional blessings and curses have to be balanced with the unconditional blessings of the Abrahamic covenant (2 Kgs 14:23-29). God remains free to balance them as he wishes. In sum, there are sufficient examples to make my point that Deut 28 within its holistic context does not teach that blessings and curses are mechanically inviolable.

2. *Diversity in Law*

1. *The Ten Commandments*

Waltke The apparent diversity between the representations of the fourth commandment pertaining to Sabbath observance pertains not to the command itself but to the rationales for the command and, while the command is spoken by God, Moses gives different rationales appropriate to the theology of the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy. This explanation finds exegetical support by noting the first commandment refers to God by using the first person pronoun, whereas the rationales refer to God by using the grammatical third person.

Enns Both the commandment and the rationale are represented as God’s word; Israel would not have made the distinction. Waltke is motivated by an *a priori* assumption about the nature of inspiration, and his ad hoc solution poses an even greater problem by distinguishing between the words of man and the words of God.

Clarification For me the issue is not whether the law is flexible; rather, it is a logical problem. If God speaks different words at the same time and in the same place on the same subject, then it behooves me to seek a viable resolution to an apparent contradiction. More than one is possible. The best resolution in this case, I suggest, can be derived from understanding narratology and observing grammar. Narratology depends on distinguishing between story and plot (see *AOTT*, pp. 94-95). According to this model, on the story level (i.e., the historical

event represented in the narrative) God commands Sabbath observance; but on the plot level (the text representing the event) Moses gives two differing rationales for the command. If so, there is no contradiction between the two texts. The narrative plot level for both Enns and me assumes an incarnational model of inspiration; it is the word of God incarnate and so on that level there is no distinction between the word of God and of man. Enns will not prefer my solution because he thinks it is driven by an *a priori* assumption of what the Bible should be. To be sure, I am prompted by the tension to explore the matter, but grammatically one can see a distinction is being made by the reference to God in first person in Exod 20:2 and by the reference to him in third person in Exod 20:9-11, especially in the conclusion: "Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." Is it not more plausible that this statement is made by the narrator rather than God? To make the matter clearer for students, I may put vv. 9-11 in parentheses.

Another observation is that prophetic speech makes no clear distinction between the words of God and the words of prophets; all are the words of both. Yet at the same time grammatical references to God, by sometimes using third person and other times using first person, represent some as the words coming from God and others as the words of the prophets. For example, note how in Micah's initial oracle of judgment he blends the two (1:2). Then Micah describes God's epiphany in judgment in connection with his accusation against the people, as signaled by his reference to God, using the third person (1:3-5). This is followed seamlessly by his representing God as handing down the judicial sentence, signaled by the change of pronouns with reference to God, now using first person (1:6-7). This change in representation of speakers is so seamless that it is scarcely perceptible to an audience and would not have raised an eyebrow. This phenomenon of shifting persons, yet regarding all as both the word of God and the word of the prophet, is typical in prophetic speech, and in a very real sense the Decalogue is also prophetic speech.

I am not saying that Enns is wrong; rather, his interpretation is not the only viable option.

2. Passover

Waltke Enns's alleged contradiction between the prescriptions in preparing the Passover in Exod 12:12-13 and Deut 16:5-7 can be resolved by noting that *bashal* essentially means "to cook," allowing the semantic pertinence of the context to determine a more precise meaning. Moreover, if we accept the meaning "cook over the fire," there is no "ludicrous" harmonization in 2 Chr 35:13.

Enns Enns agrees that *bashal* can mean "to cook" (see 2 Sam 13:8 and probably Num 11:8) and is now willing to allow a more neutral term like "to cook" as an appropriate gloss in Deuteronomy. Nevertheless, he prefers to leave open its meaning, for he prefers to allow tensions in Scripture rather than my predilection to remove them. He also allows that "cook" is an appropriate gloss in Chronicles but qualifies his statement by saying that the Chronicler invests the term with the meaning "to cook" from that writer's desire to fuse texts, not from a desire for lexical accuracy.

Clarification Since Enns prefers to allow the texts to mean “to not *bashal* in water” (Exod) against “*bashal* [possibly in water]” (Deut), it might clarify matters by making two points. First, this resolution yields non-sense if the Author intended both: one cannot both cook the Passover over the fire and boil it in water at the same time in the same place. (By the way, the Hebrew text does not use ‘*al* [“over”] but *b’* [“in,” “with”]). Paul Ricoeur argues that “semantic pertinence” is essential to establish meaning. The juxtaposition of two inapposite terms is not semantically pertinent, not sensible. “To roast in water” is possible in some modern authors who deliberately aim to confound sense, or as an oxymoron in poetry, from which the reader is challenged to tease out meaning, but we presumably agree that the author or authors of Exodus and Deuteronomy are aiming to write cogently and not figuratively. My judgment that Enns’s interpretation of the Chronicler’s exegetical activity results in a “ludicrous harmonization” is not based on my *a priori* expectations of the way I expect the Chronicler to handle Scripture, but on my expectation that good writers do not write nonsense. Semantic pertinence is the basis of lexicography of any text in any language, ancient or modern; a word must make sense in its context. It is also the basis for judging the best of possible interpretations.

Second, it is a basic rule of hermeneutics that in cases of ambiguity, one interprets an unclear statement in light of a clear one; in this case, the clear meaning in Exodus to roast the Passover, not to *bashal* it in water, has priority in determining the meaning of ambiguous *bashal* in Deuteronomy. Undoubtedly the Chronicler was motivated by his desire to fuse the two laws, not by a desire for lexical accuracy; that is not my point. Nevertheless, in the historical context of our interaction of interpreting ancient texts, we must appeal to lexicography and to an accredited hermeneutic to reach clarity and possibly a resolution.

3. *Sacrifice*

I am grateful to Enns for correcting my misunderstanding of his position.

4. *Gentiles*

In this case, Enns agrees with me that “there is another interpretation” to Deut 23:3, and I agree with him that more research is needed. So I think it best not to discuss the interpretative options further in this set of interchanges, aside from noting there are other options of interpretation.

3. *God and Diversity*

1. *One God or Many Gods?*

I covered the issue of many gods in my introductory remarks above. I need only add that my assessment that Enns’s approach could lead to open theism came to me as an afterthought. I mention that only to caution against jumping to conclusions about another person’s motives.

2. *Does God Change His Mind?*

In light of my brief comment, Enns says: “I actually think that we are in agreement on this one.” If I misunderstood Enns, I apologize for not being a better reader. I prefer not to pursue in this restricted forum the larger issues of

the representations in narrative literature of the paradoxes of God's transcendence and of his immanence and of ontology and epistemology.

III. *The Old Testament and Its Interpretation in the New Testament*

1. *Biblical Interpretation in the Second Temple Period*

1. *Innerbiblical Interpretation: The New Testament Use of the Old Testament*

Daniel 9:21-22

Waltke The angelic revelation in Dan 9:21-22 that there is yet another "seventy sevens" of years of punishment to be inflicted upon Israel is neither surprising nor dependent upon special illumination to provide Daniel with the deeper meaning contained in Jeremiah's words in Jer 25:11; 29:10. This is so because the covenant curses threatened to punish Israel seven times over if they persisted in their sin (Lev 26:18), and in the immediate context Daniel is confessing his and Israel's sins (Dan 9:20).

Enns My interpretation is "overly subtle" because it distances Gabriel's insight too far from the immediate context that pertains to Jer 25:11; 29:10. Moreover, my interpretation is prompted by my unwillingness to accept the "handling of antecedent Scripture [Jer 25:11; 29:10?] in a manner that is not bound to its historical sense."

Clarification I do not mean to suggest that Gabriel's revelation of an additional 7 x 70 stands apart from Jeremiah; rather, I am arguing that it is a new insight into the extension of Jeremiah's original prediction of seventy years of exile into an absolutely perfect scheme of redemptive history in accordance with God's original covenant with Israel. The prophets base their oracles on the blessings and curses of the Mosaic covenant, usually without saying so in so many words. Why not Gabriel? And would not a person as keen as Daniel to keep covenant with God know about the curse? However, Daniel needed special illumination to understand the application of the covenant curse to Israel's current situation, for Israel's history shows that Israel's Sovereign applied the covenant blessings and curses in connection with his freedom to rule Israel's history as he will, not mechanistically.

In his response Enns ignores both the covenant curse for continued sin and Daniel's confession of Israel's sin, and so it escapes me why my interpretation, which does justice to all three passages, should be ruled out as "overly subtle."

2. *Pesher and Luke 24:44-48*

Waltke In Luke 24:44-48 Jesus Christ does not use the Qumran covenanters' *pesher* hermeneutic, for earlier Jesus assumes the plain sense [i.e., the grammatico-historical hermeneutic] as pointing to his death and resurrection (Luke 24:25-26). I argue that Peter also uses this hermeneutic, not *pesher* (Acts 2:25-36).

Enns There is a broad scholarly consensus that there is some connection between apostolic exegesis and *pesher*. Also, Enns seems to agree with me that

our Lord assumes the plain sense because Jesus' charge of culpability (Luke 24:25) would otherwise have no teeth. Nevertheless, he continues to insist that Luke 24:25-26 must be understood in its own historical contingency, by which he means that Jesus' "own handling of the Old Testament is anything but 'plain sense' according to our understanding of the term" (cf. Exod 3:6 and Luke 20:34-38). A plain sense reading of Ps 16 that Peter uses in Acts 2 "makes one scratch his/her head."

Clarification In my response I argue *only* that Luke 24 does not lend support to the notion that the NT uses a *peshet* hermeneutic, and Enns seems to agree. I argue that both our Lord and Peter appeal to history to defend their Christology. In any case, I did not claim that the NT always uses a straightforward, plain sense hermeneutic.² The issue of the NT's use of the OT is beyond the scope of our interchange.

Enns's citing of Jesus' appeal to Exod 3:6, however, is worthy of further reflection. Here we should be historically sensitive to the context in which our Lord cites this passage. Jesus is arguing with the Sadducees, who narrow the canon of Scripture to the Pentateuch and who use sophisticated hermeneutics, later called by the rabbis *pilpul*. So our Lord cleverly uses their own canon and their own hermeneutics that required no appropriate standards of proof—surely not straightforward—to argue for the resurrection of the dead. In his skilful use of Exodus, Jesus outwits them on the basis of their flawed canon and their flawed Midrash *pilpul*—not Qumran *peshet*—hermeneutic, leaving them astonished at his brilliance, replying, "Well said, teacher!"

2. *Apostolic Hermeneutics as a Second Temple Phenomenon: Interpretive Methods*

1. *Matthew 2:15 and Hosea 11:1*

Waltke I argued that Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1 is better explained as typology, which assumes a divine intentionality between an earlier event in salvation history, in this case Israel's exodus from Egypt, and the NT fulfillment: Christ's exodus from Egypt. I disagreed with Enns that it should be interpreted as Midrash, a hermeneutic—as I understood Enns to mean—that says that Matthew manipulates Hosea's statement to make a reluctant text mean what he knows to be right. I further argued that this sort of arbitrary interpretation disparages a high regard for Scripture's inspiration.

Enns Matthew's use of Hosea "has very little in common with what the prophet intended." I am guided by a theological *a priori*, not by the writer's historical context. Enns agrees with me that the theological foundation of typological thinking is that "the divine author's mind transcends the mind of the

² In our forthcoming *Psalms in Christian Worship: Hearing the Voices of the Psalmist and of the Church in Response* (title not finalized; forthcoming according to Eerdmans in 2009), Professor Houston—former Oxford lecturer in historical geography, specialist in the history of ideas, and founder of Regent College—and I probe the hermeneutics of the Psalter through the whole of church history beginning with the apostolic period. Such a study reveals the historical contingency of interpretations, including the modern conditioning of contemporary scholars by so-called "scholarly developments."

human author,” but he qualifies his agreement by adding, “That is not the point.” Moreover, Matthew’s understanding of Hosea can only be achieved after the fact, that is, in light of Christ’s coming. Though Enns recognizes that the two horizons can be related by “typology,” this appeal should not obscure “the hermeneutical activity of Matthew, which is the *means by which the event horizons are fused*.”

Clarification I am not calling into question that Midrash hermeneutic influenced Matthew. Many scholars I have read grant that point. Moreover, Enns takes us toward greater clarification by admitting typology may be involved in Matthew’s use of Hosea, but it should be noted he did not present it as a possibility in *I&I*. Let me explain why I think the point is important to our discussion, not beside the point.

The similarities between typology and Midrash need to be stated clearly by Enns. Of pertinence here is that typology assumes the Author of Scripture has a progressive plan of redemption, and Midrash hermeneutic does not use that model. As a result, so it seems to me, they fuse the event horizons differently.

To be sure, in neither a typological hermeneutic nor in a midrashic hermeneutic could one have anticipated that the earlier event anticipated the later corresponding event. For example, one could not have guessed at the significance of Balaam’s encounter with the donkey until after the greater fulfillment of Balak’s encounter with Balaam. Likewise, one could not have guessed that Hosea’s allusion to God’s calling his son, Israel, out of Egypt was a type of his calling his Son, Jesus, out of Egypt. Hosea certainly did not. But Matthew sees the correspondence because he believes God is writing sacred history according to his eternal plan, the trajectory of which finds fulfillment in Christ. This seems to be the case because Matthew refers to the Antitype as a fulfillment of the type.

Typology assumes that redemptive history was in the mind of God from the beginning and that he designed the type to show that he is writing Israel’s redemptive history. The Antitype event fulfillment of the event type is just as much “fulfillment” as an intentional verbal prediction of an event that finds fulfillment in a later event. Typology assumes a high view of inspiration in that its fusion of the event horizons assumes God has a design for sacred history, and that that revealed history points to him as the Author of that story. Midrash, by contrast, fuses the event horizons by the commentator’s manipulation of the ancient text without regard to the unfolding of a unified redemptive history.

Moreover, typological interpretation is consistent with Matthew’s hermeneutical context. To the best of my knowledge accredited scholars recognize typology as a hermeneutic activity of the apostles. Enns, however, does not document typology in Second Temple literature, and I am not competent to judge that matter.

In a nutshell, if I understand the matter sufficiently, the recognition of typology is important to our discussion because, unlike Midrash, it represents God as the Author of the redemptive history progressively revealed in the canon of Holy Scripture.

2. *2 Corinthians 6:2 and Isaiah 49:8*

See introduction.

3. *Second Temple Interpretive Traditions*

Waltke Stories found in the NT, but not in the OT, may be preservations of ancient traditions, not fictitious traditions generated in the Second Temple epoch. The apostles represent them as real history; if they are fictitious, the doctrines based on them are questionable.

The story about angels accompanying God when he mediated his *Torah* through Moses, which Enns attempts to explain, in fact exemplifies my traditional Reformed explanation of the phenomenon in question. Two other poems (Judg 5:5; Hab 3:3), undoubtedly earlier than the Second Temple, validate that the “holy ones” in Deut 33:2 is a metonymy for an angelic company, not for Israel—in spite of the same metonymy for Israel in Deut 33:3. This is so because all three poems speak of God coming to meet Israel from mountains in the south, a tradition not recorded in Exodus.

Enns Enns finds, probably with some justice, numerous difficulties in the way in which I phrased the argument. His point was that the NT authors are influenced by their “interpreted Bibles.” He argues that my distinction between “history” and “fiction” is based on a modern understanding, and so he calls upon me to define more clearly what I mean by these terms. Otherwise, I am begging the issue. Enns continues to call the traditions in question “midrashically generated.” Furthermore, he insists that my contention that the veracity of the NT is called into question if the names Jannes and Jambres are not historical, begs the question. Also, my interpretation of Deut 33:2 is an ad hoc interpretation to preserve my understanding of the nature of Scripture, that “the NT can only record historically accurate information and not Jewish tradition.” Furthermore, Enns maintains that, with regard to Deut 33:2 my appeal to distant texts, not to the immediate context, for my identification of “holy ones,” is a technique common in Jewish midrashic exegesis.

Clarification Probably I should have represented Enns more clearly by employing his expression that the apostles used an “interpreted Bible.” On the other hand, Enns needs to clarify more clearly the relationship between the story level of historic event and the plot level of the narrative, which admittedly may contain Midrash hermeneutic, Graeco-Roman rhetoric, narrator creativity in representing the event, and so forth. The important point here is whether the represented story/event level is historical or fictitious.

It would be helpful if Enns would define more clearly what he means by “midrashically generated” stories. If he intends to blur the distinction between “history” and “fiction”—as James Mitchner did in his historical novels—he needs to state clearly what is historical, as Mitchner did in some of his novels. In the case of *The Da Vinci Code*, it made a big difference to people whether Dan Brown accurately represented his alleged historical data in his foreword. For most, Brown’s “doctrine” of Christ stands or falls on that issue. Note that the apostles argue at numerous points that they are writing real history, not myths in

the sense of fictions, so evidently the distinction was important to them, not just to moderns. Elsewhere, Enns uses the word “Midrash” to refer to what moderns think of as specious argumentation; is that what he means by “midrashically generated”?

Enns’s deficiency in not giving his readers alternative interpretations for the texts that he uses to establish his novel model of inspiration also occurs in his treatment of non-canonical stories in the NT. The traditional view holds that in the case of non-canonical stories cited in the NT literature, such as the case of the rebels Jannes and Jambres, the NT writers preserve ancient traditions that antedate the Second Temple literature. Enns does not entertain this understanding but instead contends that these non-canonical traditions were “midrashically generated” during the Second Temple period.

Since Enns also cited the story of the giving of the Law by angels as being midrashically generated story, I used it to demonstrate the preservation of an ancient tradition. I argued that Deut 33:2 preserves an ancient tradition that God gave the Law in conjunction with angels, though the Exodus narrative of the giving of the Law makes no mention of this.

Enns argued that my interpretation of “holy ones” (Deut 33:2) as a reference to angels is an ad hoc explanation to adjust the text to my theological prejudice. Though I arrived at this interpretation from the Hebrew text independently from Keil and Delitzsch, these authorities agree with me, commenting on Deut 33:2: “The Lord came not only from Sinai, but from heaven, ‘out of holy myriads,’ i.e., out of the midst of the thousands of holy angels who surround His throne.”³

Among other exegetical matters that need clarification in Deut 33:2 are the meanings of *boʾ/ʾatah* (“come”); the preposition *min* (“from”); the context (the scene is Sinai in Deut 33:3-5); and the labeling of the same topos as “Mount Sinai,” “Seir,” “Teman,” “Mount Paran,” and “mountain slopes of the south.” It makes a difference whether Israel *met* the Lord at Sinai or *came* from Sinai with reference to going to the sworn land. Judges 5:5; Hab 3:3; and Deut 33:2 all represent the Lord as coming from Sinai; to my knowledge no text asserts Israel came from Sinai “when the leaders of the people assembled, along with the tribes of Israel” at Sinai. In other words, the immediate text has nothing to do with their coming from Sinai to the sworn land.

IV. Conclusion

Again, I commend Enns for challenging me to re-think the nature of inspiration. This is not faint praise.

As I remarked in the introduction to this essay, tensions in the Bible do not trouble me; they mirror the messiness of life and promote profitable theological reflection and growth. But Enns takes us beyond diversity. His alleged entailments of his interpretation of the model of incarnational inspiration include—at least so it seems to me—such human foibles as contradictions, mistaken teachings in earlier revelation, and building doctrines on *pesher*, arbitrary

³ K&D 1:1008.

interpretations, and he does not correct me. These assertions go beyond mere tensions and call into question the cogency of the biblical writers, the inerrancy of the Bible's Source, and the infallibility of the divine/human texts.

Enns claims that rigorous exegesis can lead him to no other conclusions. I disagree; responsible exegesis may lead to different conclusions in the disputed texts on which he bases his thesis, as my interchanges with *I&I* and Enns have sought to clarify.