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PARALLEL READING STRATEGIES AND THE SEARCH FOR THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS AS A *CRUX INTERPRETUM*

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the interpretive activity of reading biblical texts in parallel, focusing on its role in conceptualizing the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. Because the biblical canon provides no single, explicit articulation of its internal dynamic, this relationship is a *crux interpretum* that faces every reader of the Christian Bible. The first section surveys distinct biblical-theological frameworks for relating the testaments and notes that each conveys important insights but also has inherent limitations. The second section focuses on a specific example: the varied New Testament utilization of Psalm 110. This case study illustrates how the practice of parallel reading, even at the granular level of exegesis, requires navigating between canonical continuity and tension. Ultimately, this hermeneutical reflection on the canon's internal complexity will deepen a reader's understanding of Scripture's multifaceted witness to Christ.

KEYWORDS: Canonical Context, Hermeneutics, Intertextuality, Psalm 110, Biblical Theology

Introduction

The idea of reading texts in parallel has the centrifugal potential to spin out into many different directions. Even when specifying a particular biblical text, a web of interrelated issues emerge that call out for analysis: text-critical questions about the form of the given texts being compared, the possible directions of dependence involved, the relevance of authorial intention, and the interpretive significance of a textual connection for readers. For biblical texts that draw upon other biblical texts, the canonical context is a further factor to consider.

When considering the canon of Christian Scripture, one must consciously or subconsciously conceptualize the relationship between the Jewish Scriptures and the writings of the New Testament. How the Old Testament relates to the New Testament is a question that faces any reader of the Christian Bible. Reading biblical passages in parallel is an interpretive activity that informs one's view of the relationship between

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the testaments. In turn, one's framework for understanding how the Old Testament relates to the New Testament often informs one's reading of specific texts. This dynamic is a natural consequence of reading biblical texts as part of a broader collection that bears theological authority and hermeneutical significance.

In this article, I consider one instance of this phenomenon: the way New Testament authors utilize the same Old Testament text in different ways. This investigation raises the question of interpretive significance. How do the intertextual references made by a biblical author impact the way that a reader understands those same texts? Because of the complexity of reading in parallel, detecting an intertextual reference in a given passage and then making sense of the textual inter-relationship is often the key to a passage's meaning and significance. Necessarily involved in this task is an interpreter's broader framework for navigating the canonical collection. In this way, the relationship between the testaments often becomes a *crux interpretum* in exegetical analysis.

The practice of parallel reading, illustrated here by the New Testament's reception of Psalm 110, both reveals and sustains the canonical interplay of continuity and tension between the testaments. This reading strategy ultimately invites readers into a mode of textual and theological interpretation that is hermeneutically flexible and resistant to reductionism.

Canonical Patterns: Conceptualizing the Relationship Between the Testaments

One way to grasp the challenges and rewards of parallel reading is to consider what is at stake in conceptualizing the relationship between the testaments at a macrostructural level. Brevard Childs described the 'search for the Christian Bible' as the effort to understand how the church receives and reads the Old Testament as Scripture in its canonical form (Childs 1984: 30–33; Childs 1992: 63–68). In particular, Childs highlights the tension between the Hebrew text of the Masoretic Tradition and the Greek translations of the so-called Septuagint tradition, both of which have a role in shaping the beliefs of Israel and the early church (cf. Driver 2010: 193–201).

New Testament authors quote extensively from the Greek translations but also show awareness of the Hebrew text and sometimes deviate from any known textual witness (cf. Wagner 2008: 17–28). Furthermore, as translations, the Greek versions are directly related to the Hebrew text that they are translating (Shepherd 2020: 1–16). For many areas of focus (i.e., text-criticism, exegesis, interpretation), both the Hebrew Bible and the Greek translations are perennially relevant. Rather than definitively resolving this tension by exclusively privileging one textual tradition over the other, readers must therefore navigate between them both. For Childs, the Christian

Bible is located within the interplay of these witnesses, as the canon itself provides the theological context within which the church reads and interprets Scripture.

This search for the Christian Bible involves reading textual traditions in parallel. Related to this task is the similar dynamic between the Hebrew Scriptures and the Greek New Testament. The Christian canon is a two-testament witness that requires each of its collections and sub-collections to communicate its message. The challenge for a reader of the Christian canon is that no biblical text directly articulates the nature of this canonical relationship. As the New Testament books were written and gathered into collections, they were inextricably linked in various ways to the Old Testament Scriptures. Even still, 'the process of relating the witness to Jesus Christ by the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament was neither simple nor obvious. No one understanding of the relationship of the two testaments emerged as normative, nor were literary techniques by which the ancient texts were rendered by the church the same' (Childs 1984: 31).

Readers must therefore form a theoretical and practical framework for making sense of this relationship between the testaments. Throughout the history of interpretation, several different connecting threads have been prioritized. Each of these biblical-theological frameworks has strengths and drawbacks. Though each of these possibilities has an extended historical development, my survey will highlight and reflect upon the relevant central concept at the heart of each option.

1. The Flow of Redemptive History

Viewing the Old and New Testaments through the lens of redemptive history emphasizes the progressive unfolding of God's saving work across time. This framework highlights continuity: the promises given to Israel find their fulfillment in Christ, and the covenantal trajectory moves from creation to consummation. The central claim here is that history itself becomes the medium of divine revelation, so that the testaments are joined by a sequence of promise and fulfillment.

Geerhardus Vos provides the classic articulation of this redemptive-historical model. He describes revelation as a divine activity, not merely a communication of truths, but a progression of acts and words in history. His focus is on what he calls the 'history of special revelation' which 'deals with the [biblical] material from the historical standpoint, seeking to exhibit the organic growth or development of the truths of special revelation' (Vos 1948: v). For Vos, the unity of the canon emerges through God's unfolding self-disclosure within successive covenantal epochs that culminates in Christ's fulfillment of the promises made to Israel. The testaments thus relate as successive stages in the one redemptive plan of God, bound together by the continuity of divine purpose.

The strength of this approach lies in its ability to display the coherence of God's redemptive plan across the canon and through time. It also anchors the Scriptures in a unified story of divine action in history. A drawback, however, is the temptation toward a simplistic linearity that flattens the rich complexity of the biblical witness. The Old Testament can be reduced to a mere prelude or an optional background context for the Christ event, rather than being valued in its own literary and theological integrity. In other words, sometimes the variety of voices in both testaments can be prematurely harmonized in smoothly crafted historical reconstructions.

2. The Plotline of a Mega Narrative

Another approach is to conceptualize the testaments as contributing to a single overarching story—a canonical 'mega narrative' that stretches from Genesis to Revelation. This view often underscores the profound coherence of Scripture where creation, fall, redemption, and restoration all fit within a unified drama of God's dealings with humanity.

Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen illustrate this approach through their proposal that Scripture functions as a coherent story of God's mission to restore the whole creation through Christ. They describe the Bible as a six-act play—from creation and fall to the church's mission and final renewal—within which every text finds its role in the divine drama. For Bartholomew and Goheen, the two testaments are not parallel volumes but successive acts in one divine plot, culminating in the renewal of all things. This story 'is a unified and progressively unfolding drama of God's action in history for the salvation of the whole world' (Goheen and Bartholomew 2014: 14). Their work demonstrates how a narrative framework can integrate theological, missional, and hermeneutical concerns, inviting readers to inhabit Scripture's grand story as involved participants rather than detached observers.

A key strength of this approach is its capacity to hold the diverse parts of Scripture together within a single, coherent storyline that highlights God's redemptive purposes from beginning to end. A note of caution, though, is that such a mega-narrative sometimes risks imposing an artificial unity that too quickly smooths over genuine tensions or ambiguities in the text. Diverse literary genres and theological emphases can also be overshadowed by the demand to serve the 'big story,' potentially muting voices that speak in ways not easily assimilated to the overarching plotline (e.g., the wisdom writings or apostolic epistles).

3. A Stream of Tradition History

The tradition-history perspective emphasizes how scriptural texts grow out of and contribute to an ongoing stream of interpretation and re-interpretation within the

experience of Israel and the early church. From this angle, the Old Testament is not only background but an active reservoir of themes, symbols, and narratives that New Testament writers adapt for fresh contexts. The key insight is that the testaments are connected by living traditions that represent how communities of faith wrestled with and reapplied earlier revelation.

Gerhard von Rad's *Old Testament Theology* remains the foundational articulation of this approach, portraying Israel's faith as a dynamic tradition continually reinterpreted in new historical situations (von Rad 1962: 108–29; cf. Sanders 1984). He argues that Israel's core confessions were never static but always retold and reshaped in response to God's ongoing acts in history. Von Rad's treatment of the Deuteronomic and prophetic traditions illustrates how theological reflection develops through successive reinterpretations rather than through strict linear progression. For him, the Old and New Testaments are joined not by direct prediction and fulfillment, but by the continuity of a living theological memory that binds generations of faith.

The strength of this model lies in its attentiveness to the effective history of Israel's confessional commitments and the creative ways in which faith communities re-appropriated earlier traditions in light of new experiences (e.g., before and after the exile). The drawback, however, is that it can tilt heavily toward historical reconstruction, focusing more on the sociological process of transmission than on the theological coherence of the canon. In such cases, the reader may lose sight of the theological force of the final canonical form in favor of speculative accounts of textual development (cf. Seitz 2001: 35–47).

4. A Series of Shared Theological Confessions

Finally, one can see the Old and New Testaments as united by a shared theological confession about the identity and purposes of God. The testimony of both testaments centers on the God of Israel who creates, redeems, judges, and renews. This perspective highlights continuity of faith: despite diverse genres, languages, and historical settings, the canon offers a fundamentally unified witness to the same God (the subject matter of both testaments).

In this vein, Brevard Childs argues that the unity of Scripture resides not in historical reconstruction but in the theological confession expressed through its canonical form (Childs 1985: 15–30). For Childs, the canon functions as the church's authoritative vehicle for hearing the one divine voice that speaks through diverse witnesses. The Old and New Testaments, though discrete in form and function, together articulate a unified theological confession centered on God's redemptive purpose. This model also underlies many evangelical treatments of various 'central themes' that can

be traced across either the contours of the canon or through the stages of redemptive history (e.g., Hafemann and House 2007; Alexander 2009).

The strength of this model lies in its theological depth and its capacity to respect both the diversity and the unity of the biblical canon. This approach allows for the coexistence of plurality and unity within Scripture's final form, preserving the dialogical richness of the canon and the theological coherence of its witness. Yet the lingering danger lies in the ever-present possibility of an overly abstracted or systematically articulated unity, where differences between the testaments are minimized or reinterpreted as sameness. When theological confession is emphasized without equal attention to textual distinctiveness, the robust dialogue between the testaments can collapse into a monologue.

Unity and Diversity in the Context of the Canon

My purpose here is not necessarily to argue for a particular framework from this list or to propose an alternative (for my constructive proposal in this regard, see Spellman 2014; and Spellman 2024). More modestly, I'm suggesting that there are meaningful hermeneutical effects that follow from these kinds of choices. A further observation is that readers of the Christian canon make this methodological move whether it is a deliberate decision, an inherited tradition of reading, or an unexamined interpretive instinct.

The four patterns sketched above illustrate some of the distinctive ways in which interpreters have sought to conceptualize the relationship between the Old and New Testaments (for more examples and further reflection along these lines, see Baker 2010). Each framework isolates a crucial dimension of the canonical witness: the historical progression of God's saving purposes, the coherence of Scripture as a unified drama, the ongoing process of reception and reinterpretation, and the confessional unity of Israel's God and the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Matthew 28:16–20). Yet each model, when utilized as an exclusive framework, also reveals interpretive liabilities: linear reductionism, artificial harmonization, historical over-fragmentation, or abstracted sameness.

The canonical form of the Christian Bible resists such one-dimensional construals. Rather, it calls for a posture of interpretive attentiveness that can acknowledge both continuity and discontinuity, both coherence and tension, both the distinct voices of the testaments and their mutual witness to the one God. Part of the reason these conceptual models continue to be utilized by readers, scholars, and theologians is because they draw attention to distinct features that are strategically significant. Each model *highlights* something significant but can also *hide* other aspects that are not part of its primary focus.

The practice of reading texts in parallel is one arena where this challenge becomes concrete, for it forces the interpreter to navigate between unity and diversity in the very texture of the canon itself. Theological exegesis requires not the elimination of these tensions through the use of a single construct but their sustained engagement. The task of discerning and delineating the relationship between the testaments thus requires both exegetical patience and hermeneutical wisdom. Moreover, it is within this dynamic canonical interplay that the church continues to hear the voice of Scripture.

Exegetical Horizons: Pairings and Parallels in the New Testament's Reception of Psalm 110

Narrowing our interpretive focus, we can see the hermeneutical significance of parallel reading at the granular level of exegesis. Psalm 110 is one of the most cited texts in the New Testament (cf. Emadi 2022). Over thirty times, the wording, imagery, or argument of this poetic text is drawn upon by a New Testament author. An examination of this psalm as a literary intertext is a useful transition from the section on the various ways of relating the testaments. The Psalter is often invoked in New Testament descriptions of the Old Testament as a whole (e.g., Luke 24:27, 44), and Psalm 110 is a significant text within this sub-collection (e.g., it's one of the royal Davidic psalms in the latter part of the collection). Careful reading of these quotations and allusions requires the technical tools of exegesis as well as the biblical-theological tools that can handle cross-canonical juxtaposition.

Significantly, the phrasing and imagery of this royal psalm is utilized in different ways by different authors. Moreover, most citations of this text are brought into a literary dialogue with other intertextual connections in order to extend or clarify its meaning. When a New Testament author portrays Jesus as the Christ, they invariably fasten their claim to either a strategic scriptural text or a distinct messianic pattern developed in the Old Testament (on this point, see Novenson 2017: 11–26; Gathercole 2022: 36–42). Psalm 110 is an important link in this web of inner-biblical connections. These intertextual pairings show both the complexity and variety of the practice of parallel reading by New Testament authors. Moreover, some of the most strident claims of New Testament authors are involved in the connection with this psalm. Indeed, the uses of this text 'are set in passages of high theological consequence, and certain phrases in the psalm have been linked with central Christian beliefs ever since' (Hay 1989: 15). The following brief examination of strategic passages that feature Psalm 110 illustrates the richness and complexity of parallel reading within a canonical context.

1. The Messiah, Whose Son is He?

In Matthew's Gospel, the most prominent use of Psalm 110 occurs as Jesus is being questioned by groups of Jewish leaders about various social issues (Matthew 22:15–46; Mark 12:13–37; Luke 20:19–44). They ask him about paying taxes, the resurrection of the dead, and which commandment is the greatest. After responding to their queries, Jesus's own counter-question is theological and exegetical. He poses, 'What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?' (Matthew 22:42 ESV). After they answer correctly that the Christ is 'the son of David,' Jesus's follow-up response complicates their answer and raises an interpretive crux from Psalm 110:1.

In the opening of this psalm, David describes a conversation between the Lord and someone he identifies as 'my Lord' ('The LORD said to my Lord,' Psalm 110:1a). The Lord tells David's Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet' (Psalm 110:1b). The specific theological point that Jesus focuses on is the comprehensive identity of the Messiah implied by this statement. 'How is it then,' Jesus asks in light of this text, 'that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord . . . If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?' (Matthew 22:45).

This interpretive interaction gives a glimpse of Jesus's exegetical approach to reading this psalm messianically. By framing his quotation of Psalm 110 with this particular question, Jesus juxtaposes the meaning of this text with a well-established expectation that the Messiah would be a ruler from the lineage of David (e.g., 2 Sam 7:14). Further, by asking, 'Whose son is he?,' Jesus makes the notion of origin central to the conversation and his reading of this text. Jesus accepts the answer that the Messiah is to be associated with the covenantal promise of a coming son of David, but he also implies a deeper dimension of the Christ's sonship.

The cited text introduces a serious theological tension. David overhears and reports divine discourse between two figures who are both characterized in exalted terms as David's Lord. The old Greek of this phrase makes the association direct by translating both *YHWH* and *adoni* as *kurios* (*eipen ho kyrios tō kyriō mou*, Psalm 109:1 LXX). The messianic figure here is spoken of in terms usually reserved for God alone.

Jesus hints at the resolution in his own divine person and messianic work. The one who would come *after* David (one of David's sons) is also the one who existed *before* him (David's Lord). From Jesus's perspective, Psalm 110 establishes the possibility that the messianic son of David who is to come is the son of God who has always been.

2. The Son of Man who Sits Down

The next use of Psalm 110 to consider involves a blending of two theologically provocative allusions to the person and work of the Messiah. After Jesus's arrest, he stands trial before the Jewish council (Matthew 26:57–68; Mark 14:53–65; Luke 22:66–71). For most of this hearing, false witnesses deliver inconsistent testimony while Jesus remains silent (Mark 14:60–61). The examination culminates when the high priest asks Jesus, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' (Mark 14:61). Jesus responds with an intertextual affirmation. He says, 'I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven' (Mark 14:62). The immediate response of the Jewish leaders to Jesus's words is to bring forth the settled charge of blasphemy and affirm its sentence of death (Mark 14:63–64).

This accusatory response prompts further reflection on Jesus's words. He first accepts the messianic title and affirms his divine sonship. His subsequent elaboration then deepens his claim and clarifies how he understands his identity as the Christ. Drawing upon the poetic imagery of Psalm 110 and the prophetic symbolism of Daniel 7–9, Jesus blends two theologically charged texts that shape messianic expectation.

In Daniel 7, Daniel sees a cosmic vision of great beasts that represent mighty nations. In this setting, Daniel beholds 'the Ancient of Days' who sits in fiery judgment over these nations and peoples. Alongside the Ancient of Days, Daniel also sees 'one like a son of man' come with 'the clouds of heaven' (Dan 7:13). This son of man receives comprehensive dominion, unsurpassed glory, an eternal kingdom, and the obedience of all peoples (Dan 7:14). Later, as Daniel asks the Lord about the meaning of Jeremiah's prophecy about the exile of Israel, the Lord's messenger tells Daniel about the coming of a messianic ruler (Dan 9:24–27).

In his response to the Jewish leadership about his claim to be this Messiah, Jesus intertwines the imagery of Daniel and the exalted language of Psalm 110:1. In his previous statements about this text (Matthew 22:45), Jesus implied the divine identity of the Messiah. Shifting from his person to his work, Psalm 110 now contributes to the comprehensive realization of Daniel's vision of a coming kingdom, the identity of the figure closely associated with the Ancient of Days, and the realization of eschatological promises. The 'son of man' who comes with 'the clouds of heaven' is also the one 'seated at the right hand of power' (Mark 14:62).

3. The Son Who is Seated and the Spirit Who is Sent

Another strategic use of Psalm 110 is the way that it helps explain the redemptive-historical significance of the sending of the Spirit. After Jesus's ascension and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, Peter rises to interpret this epochal event in redemptive

history. In his sermon, Peter draws upon Psalm 110 alongside a sequence of prophetic and poetic texts that clarify the meaning and significance of the Spirit's presence among them.

To explain the miraculous speech enabled by the gift of the Spirit, Peter quotes from the prophet Joel and clarifies that the presence of the poured out Spirit among the people indicates that they are now living 'in the last days' (Acts 2:17–21; Joel 2:28–32). Peter then recalls Jesus's ministry, death, and resurrection. Jesus's resurrection in particular was prophetically portrayed by David in the language of Psalm 16 (Acts 2:25–28; Psalm 16:8–11). Peter connects this psalm to David's trust in God's covenant promise that a future son of David would receive an eternal kingdom. In this sense, David 'foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption' (Acts 2:31).

At just this pivotal point in his argument, Peter uses Psalm 110:1 to structure his account of the divine missions of the Son and the Spirit: 'Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing' (Acts 2:33). Peter insists that these assertions are about the messianic son of David, not David himself. Jesus ascended into the heavens as the Christ. David himself testifies to this identification when he says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool"' (Acts 2:34–35).

In Peter's inaugural new covenant sermon, Psalm 110 is the backdrop for a triune portrayal of divine agency as redemptive history enters a new era. The resurrected and ascended Son sends the promised Spirit of the Father to inaugurate and indwell the believing community. The resurrection and ascension of Christ are necessary in order for the Son to pour out the Spirit and initiate the era of the new covenant. The setting of Psalm 110:1 also clarifies the theological locations involved in the incarnation and ascension. The Son comes *from* the Father's right hand in the incarnation and *returns* to this position of exaltation after completing his work on earth. This movement undergirds Peter's claim that 'God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified' (Acts 2:36).

4. The Exalted Son and Appointed Priest

An important further text to consider is the letter to the Hebrews. In this thickly theological letter, the writer strategically draws on Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 and presents them in deliberate sequence and pairing in order to shape its Christological vision (cf. Compton 2015: 1–13). In the prologue (Hebrews 1:1–4), the author alludes first to Psalm 2:8 ('the heir of all things,' Hebrews 1:2) and then to Psalm 110:1 ('he sat

down at the right hand,' Hebrews 1:3) in order to frame the Son's exaltation as both the royal heir of David and the enthroned priest-king.

This pattern is reinforced in Hebrews 1:5–14, where Psalm 2:7 ('You are my Son, today I have begotten you,' Hebrews 1:5) stands at the head of a chain of Old Testament quotations that elevate the Son above angels (where it is paired with 2 Sam 7:14), while Psalm 110:1 ('Sit at my right hand,' Hebrews 1:13) concludes the series and provides the climactic affirmation of the Son's permanent enthronement at God's right hand. This structure suggests intentional bracketing: Psalm 2 initiates the argument, Psalm 110 closes it, and together they establish the Son's identity as God's chosen ruler who shares in divine authority.

This interpretive dynamic resurfaces in Hebrews 5, where the two psalms again appear in tandem. Here, however, the author moves beyond enthronement language to emphasize priestly vocation. Psalm 2:7 again grounds the Son's filial and messianic status ('You are my Son,' Hebrews 5:5), while Psalm 110:4 ('You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek,' Hebrews 5:6) now interprets the significance of that sonship in priestly terms. Here, the writer offers yet another interpretive horizon for Psalm 110 by drawing sustained attention to the priestly dimension of the text.

This move signals both continuity and departure. Continuity, in that Hebrews also recognizes the exalted Son as the one seated at God's right hand (Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:13). Departure, in that this exaltation is now inseparably tied to priesthood, a vocation not associated with Davidic kingship but introduced through the enigmatic figure of Melchizedek (cf. Mathews 2013). By juxtaposing Psalm 2, Psalm 110:1, and 110:4, Hebrews creates a theological synthesis that locates Jesus simultaneously in the royal and priestly spheres.

The rhetorical effect of this parallel reading is to establish the uniqueness of Jesus's mediatorial role. The Levitical priesthood, tied to the mosaic covenant and perpetuated through hereditary succession, is portrayed as limited and provisional. In contrast, Jesus's priesthood, grounded in divine oath and symbolically foreshadowed in Melchizedek, is eternal and unrepeatable (Hebrews 7:20–24). The exalted Son does not merely reign; he intercedes. He is not only enthroned but appointed to the sanctuary 'not made with hands' (Hebrews 9:24). The convergence of these themes deepens the significance of enthronement itself: to sit at God's right hand is to reign as the enthroned high priest who eternally mediates the covenantal blessings of God to his people.

By weaving these psalms together, Hebrews portrays Jesus as the unique Son whose authority and priesthood are inseparable, mutually defining realities. The Christology of Hebrews is therefore deeply shaped by the interrelationship of Psalm 2 and Psalm 110. The Son is not only the enthroned king but also the eternal priest,

and the convergence of these psalms enables the author to articulate the fullness of Christ's exalted identity and redemptive work.

This interpretive development shows how Psalm 110 generates fresh theological possibilities when read in different canonical settings. For Hebrews, the psalm's juxtaposition of kingship and priesthood provides the categories needed to articulate Christ's once-for-all sacrifice and ongoing intercession. The exalted Son is also the appointed priest, and this dual identity shapes the believer's relationship to God. The priestly enthronement of Christ assures access, confidence, and perseverance for those who draw near to God through him (Hebrews 4:14–16; 10:19–23). Here the hermeneutical act of parallel reading presses beyond messianic expectation into the heart of Christian soteriology.

5. What the Son Does at the Father's Right Hand

A final group of New Testament texts use Psalm 110 to describe the Son's present activity and future triumph. In one sense, the image of the son *seated* in God's presence seems to be a passive statement that communicates Jesus's status as the exalted Lord. There is also an active sense of the Son's present ongoing work that is showcased by the architecture of psalm's imagery.

Paul uses the psalm's phrasing in Romans 8 to give believers ultimate assurance. Christ's position 'at the right hand of God' is not one of passive rest but of active care. From this place of supreme authority, he 'is indeed interceding for us' (Rom 8:34). His session secures our ultimate salvation (Rom 8:31–39). Similarly, the author of Hebrews contrasts Christ's finished work with the unending labor of the old covenant priests. Those priests stand daily, offering sacrifices that can never perfect the worshiper. Christ, after his single, perfect sacrifice, 'sat down at the right hand of God' (Hebrews 10:12). His sitting is a declaration of completion. In these passages, the enthronement described in Psalm 110 is the basis for the believer's present confidence and spiritual communion with God.

The theme of Christ's reign also has a future dimension, which is drawn from the psalm's language of subjugating enemies. Hebrews notes that the enthroned Christ is 'waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet' (Hebrews 10:13). Paul expands this idea in 1 Corinthians 15, where he frames the entire period between Christ's resurrection and return as an active reign. Christ 'must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet' (1 Corinthians 15:25). This reign is a progressive victory over every hostile power, which will end with the final destruction of death itself. Psalm 110 thus provides a powerful eschatological vision. It portrays Christ's session not as simple or static waiting, but as an active, triumphant rule that guarantees the final consummation of his kingdom.

The Joyful Complexity of Parallel Reading

The case of Psalm 110 illustrates the interpretive fruitfulness of reading biblical texts in parallel. Quotations and allusions to this poetic text are integral elements of certain intramural interpretive controversies, Jesus's testimony in the trial narrative, Peter's Pentecost sermon, and the priestly exposition of Hebrews. This placement yields multiple applications and extensions of the psalm's meaning. Each setting activates different dimensions of the text—royal sonship, eschatological vindication, Spirit-sending enthronement, eternal priesthood—while still tethering them to a shared canonical anchor. Readers are thereby invited into a multifaceted vision of Christ's identity and work that no single passage could convey in isolation.

The exercise of reading texts in parallel also shows that the relationship between the testaments is neither simple nor secondary. It is constitutive of the way the Christian Bible communicates its message. The biblical canon continually presses its readers into patterns of comparison and synthesis. Further, the conceptual patterns surveyed above each capture something essential about the internal relation of Christian Scripture's two-testament witness: its historical unfolding, its narrative coherence, its layered composition, and its theological confession. In exegesis, an interpreter must have a grasp of the canon's shape that is firm enough to admit some form of organic unity and yet flexible enough to handle the varied ways that one biblical text draws upon another.

Such complexity is not a hermeneutical liability but a theological gift that reminds readers that the meaning of Scripture is not exhausted by a single pane of a larger mosaic. Rather, this interpretive density reflects both the inexhaustibility of the biblical witness and the richness of the one to whom it testifies. To read in parallel, then, is not merely to decipher exegetical puzzles but to inhabit the spaciousness of the canon and to deepen our awareness of how its symphony of textual refrains converge in the confession that Jesus is both Lord and Christ.

In this sense, the 'search for the Christian Bible' that Childs described is not merely an academic pursuit but a lived hermeneutical task. The canon itself summons readers into a discipline of parallel reading where coherence emerges through ongoing engagement with the whole collection. The joyful complexity of this practice is not a problem to be solved but a readerly reality to be embraced. In the end, this canonical dynamic is worth persevering because through it the voice of the living God continues to address the church through the Scriptures.

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