

Dr. Dave Mathewson, Hermeneutics, Lecture 25, OT in NT 2

© 2024 Dave Mathewson and Ted Hildebrandt

In talking about Hebrews 6, 4 through 6 in the Old Testament background, I also want to make it clear that I'm not, at this point, interested in solving the whole Calvinistic-Arminian debate and how this text is approached, though I think the Old Testament background can help provide some avenues for raising those questions and answering them in fresh ways. But that's not my main purpose. My main purpose is to demonstrate the possibility of an Old Testament background for these phrases that we've read in 4 through 6 of Hebrews 6, and how that might make a difference in the way we read the text.

Now, when you read Hebrews chapter 6, two important points to begin with before exploring the Old Testament background is one that we've already mentioned, and that is Hebrews 6 is simply one of a series of warning passages throughout the book of Hebrews, where the author tries to convince, in a very compelling way, his readers not to turn their backs on Christ and the gospel, the new covenant salvation that has been brought with Christ, and to go back to Judaism, but instead to press on and embrace Christ in faith, no matter what consequences that might bring. And we've already seen chapter 2, 1 through 4, that's the first warning passage. There's another one in chapters 3 and 4, and then chapter 6, and then a couple more later on.

But, two, the second observation, number two is, one facet of these warning passages, at least the first two and the last two, is that the author appears to compare his readers to the Old Testament people of Israel, especially the Old Testament people of Israel during the time where they were led out of Egypt and wandered through the wilderness and the desert up to the promised land, where, if you remember the story goes, when they get to the promised land, the very land that God promised them, all the way back to Abraham, now God's fulfilling His

promise. They come up to the land, and at Kadesh Barnea, they send two spies in, or they send twelve spies in, ten of them come back and give a bad report, and Israel refuses and rebels. They don't go into the land, though God commanded them to and promised that He would give them the land.

They refuse to believe and they rebel, and they don't go in. That story, much of that story, lies behind all the warning passages in chapter two, and the one in chapter three and four, and in chapter ten and twelve, you find references to Israel's story, especially during that period of time, as they trek through the wilderness to Sinai to receive the law, and on to the promised land where they rebel and don't go in. The question is whether the example or the warning passage in chapter six likewise has an Old Testament example, and I would suggest that it does.

In fact, I would suggest that this story of Israel leaving Egypt, making their trek through the desert up to the promised land, and their rebellion at Kadesh Barnea forms the background for all of these statements in Hebrews 6, 4 through 6. And all of these allude to, although they're describing the modern-day readers of Hebrews, the people that the author is addressing, they are alluding to and couching those terms and descriptions of the readers of Hebrews in terms of the descriptions of what the people of God experienced as they made their march through the desert up to the promised land. So, for example, the fact that they are described, we'll take these in order, the fact that they are described as enlightened, for those who have once been enlightened. Elsewhere, I think the author makes it clear that this refers to receiving knowledge of the truth of the gospel, but this language of being enlightened probably reflects, and again, if you think about, if you listen to and you have your ears open to the Old Testament subtext, this probably reflects the light that guided the pillar of light that guided the Israelites.

That's referred to several times, and I'm appealing not only to the original Exodus story in the text from Exodus, but subsequent descriptions and records of, in the Psalms and in Nehemiah chapter 9, you often find rehearsals of how God has dealt with his people, kind of a rehearsal of the history of Israel and how God has dealt with them. Many of them rehearse and describe important events surrounding the original Exodus and leading the Israelites of the desert up to the promised land. So, based on all these descriptions, probably when the author refers to being enlightened, it's an allusion to the pillar of light that guided Israel in the desert.

When he says they've also tasted the heavenly gift, I think that's a little bit easier, and that is it probably reflects the giving of manna, the manna that falls from heaven, that is, again, in the Psalms and other texts that rehearse the history of Israel in Exodus, is described as a gift from God and is described as something that comes from heaven. So, tasting the heavenly gift would correspond to the Israelites tasting the manna that comes from heaven as a gift from God. Now, the next one might call this theory into question, the fact that they have shared in the Holy Spirit.

But what is interesting is that you do have a couple of references to the Holy Spirit in the midst of the Israelites, in causing some of them to prophesy. But one interesting passage is Isaiah chapter 63 and verse 10, which again seems to be referring to a record or rehearsing God's mighty acts on behalf of his people Israel. But in 63 verse 10, this is very interesting.

Let me back up and just read a couple of verses. He said, Surely they are my people, God referring to Israel, they are my people, sons who will not be false to me. And so he became their Savior.

In their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of presence saved them. That's a reference to the Exodus. In his love and mercy he redeemed them in the Exodus.

He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. Which probably refers to taking them through the desert. Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.

So apparently the Israelites through the rebellion and refusal to maintain their covenant relationship with God are depicted in Isaiah 63 as grieving the Holy Spirit that God had given them. So the reference, even to the reference of sharing in the Holy Spirit, reflects the experience of the Israelites in the desert. Their experience with the Holy Spirit.

The fact that they tasted of the word of God reflects descriptions even in the book of Joshua of the law, the giving of the law on Sinai, the powers of the age to come. It's interesting that in Old Testament text often the miraculous signs, such as even what Moses did in front of Pharaoh and the magicians, and later on parting the Red Sea and other miraculous provisions in the desert are often called signs or are often called powers and wonders. So that once again the experience of the people that the author of Hebrews is addressing is now seen as analogous to the experience of the Israelites who also experienced various powers and miracles and wonders.

Yet they have fallen away. It says in Hebrews 6, yet they fall away. Which probably then would reflect the rebellion or falling away at Kadesh Barnea when they refused to go in to the land of promise that God had commanded them to take.

One very interesting text to note some of these correspondences is, intriguingly, I think the book of Nehemiah. And chapter 9 is a rehearsal. Again, there's other texts we could point to, a couple in the Psalms.

But in Nehemiah chapter 9 we find one of those rehearsals of God's dealing with his people Israel. And especially in verses 9 and 10. Actually he begins at the beginning.

He starts with God's appearance to Abraham. But starting at verse 9 of Nehemiah 9. Again, Nehemiah rehearsing the mighty acts of God. You saw the suffering of your forefathers in Egypt.

You heard the cry at the Red Sea. You sent miraculous signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his officials and all the people of the land. For you knew how arrogantly the Egyptians treated them.

You made a name for yourself which remains to this day. You divided the sea before them so that they passed to dry ground. But you hurled the pursuers into the depths, like a stone into the mighty waters.

By day you led them with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire to enlighten them, or to give them light on the way they were to take. So I'll stop there. It goes on and talks about the giving of the law, etc.

So there are other accounts similar to this that use language very similar to what you find in Hebrews 6, 4-6. So that I would propose that what the author is doing is trying to explain the situation of his readers in light of the situation of the Old Testament people of God. And demonstrating the point is that there seems to be a typological relationship between the two.

And so what the author wants to do is warn his readers not to do the same thing their ancestors did. Their ancestors also experienced all these things. The heavenly gift, the provisions of God, light, enlightenment to guide their path.

They tasted the good word of God through the law. They experienced all these powers and miracles. They shared and participated in the Holy Spirit.

Yet they still rebelled and refused to believe and they fell away. And they suffered the consequences. Now the author of Hebrews addressing his new covenant readers, those who now have been confronted with the gospel of Jesus Christ, they also have experienced all these things.

An enlightenment through the gospel. Tasting the heavenly gift. Experiencing all these miraculous powers.

And tasting the good word of God. And participating and experiencing the Holy Spirit. Now they are likewise in danger of committing the same mistake as their ancestors did.

So the author is warning them, don't commit the same mistake. But instead embrace Christ and follow him in obedience no matter what the cost. So in my opinion, Hebrews 6, 4-6, I think, kind of takes on a different hue.

And can be seen in a fresh light when one reads it in light of the Old Testament background. Again, in and of itself, this might not be completely compelling. But the fact that the author, number one, the fact that the author has utilized an Old Testament example in every other warning passage.

And second, the fact that the Israelites of the wilderness generation, those who left Egypt, made the trek through the wilderness up to the promised land, yet refused to go. And the fact that that plays such a crucial role in Hebrews, suggests to me the validity of reading chapter 6, 4-6, in light of those events as well. That again, the author is drawing a comparison, perhaps typologically, between his New Testament readers and the Old Testament people of God in wanting them not to recapitulate their experience.

The last text I want to consider, or last examples I want to consider, are a series of passages, or a couple of passages from the book of Revelation. Namely, looking at the last two chapters. The final vision in chapter 21-1 and 22-5.

And then a short warning at the very end of the book in 22 verses 18 and 19. Chapter 21-1 through 22-5. Chapter 21 verse 1 through chapter 22 in verse 5, is a long extended vision that functions as the climax of the book.

It actually forms a counterpart to chapters 17 and 18, where the author sees another city, which is symbolized as a woman, that is the prostitute Babylon, which probably stands for Rome. And he sees its destruction. But the prostitute Babylon is removed in order to make room for the bride New Jerusalem, for another city portrayed as a female.

So this is kind of the climactic vision of the whole book. This is the final reward and the final salvation of God's people in a New Jerusalem and a New Creation in chapter 21-1 through 22-5. Now interestingly, this text provides a rather fruitful field of study for looking at the Old Testament and the New, because it is so saturated with Old Testament texts.

Again, the author never quotes from an Old Testament passage. There's a couple of texts that I think come close, and could be seen as sort of indirect quotations, where the author follows word for word and keeps the text intact, even though he doesn't introduce it with a quotation formula. But this is so saturated with Old Testament texts, that one scholar said, interestingly, and I think he's virtually right, is if all the Old Testament allusions in 21 and 22 were removed, you would have virtually nothing left.

Maybe a verse or two left. But we'll see the author weaves together a number of texts from the Old Testament into his own climactic vision. And we've already seen, you often find New Testament authors doing that, is taking a number of texts, sometimes referring to the same event, or same concept, or same ideas, and weaving them together, rather than only following one text.

So in Revelation 21 and 22, John gathers together a variety of Old Testament texts, especially from prophetic literature, but once in a while from narrative, and now weaves it together into this grand, climactic prophetic vision of God's intention to reward his people, and to bring about a new creation as the goal of his redemptive activity on behalf of his people. And what I want to do is just look at a number of examples. It would take us hours and hours to go through all the New Testament or Old Testament texts that lie behind John's vision.

So I want to only mention a couple of them. Some of them obvious, some of them not so obvious. Sometimes demonstrating how Old Testament texts are brought up, utilized, and even transformed and changed.

So we'll just go through the texts and highlight some of the main features. Sometimes referring just to one or two texts. At other times, see how entire sections of Old Testament texts are utilized as a model or basis for what John sees, and for what he writes.

The first one, which is rather an easy one, and there's very little debate, is the very first verse of Revelation chapter 21, where John says, And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. We'll look at that phrase, and the sea was no more as well. But the first part of Isaiah chapter 65, I'm sorry, of Revelation 21 and verse 1, seems to be a direct reference then to Isaiah chapter 65.

And the reference of the new heaven and the new earth, because the old had passed away. So John intends to understand chapter 21 and 22 within the framework again, of Isaiah's anticipation of the establishment of a new creation. So what that suggests immediately is the entirety of chapter 21 and 22 has a physical, earthly quality to it.

Albeit one that is transformed and stripped of all the effects of sin, and the things that plague this present earth. At the same time, 21 and 22 reminds us, with this quote, this allusion to Isaiah 65, that the ultimate destiny of God's people is not a heavenly one, but it is an earthly one. Which is exactly God's intention for humanity going back to Genesis chapters 1 and 2. But what is more interesting is that cryptic phrase at the end of verse 1, and the sea was no more.

So you have a new heavens and new earth emerging in place of the old heavens and earth, but then he almost hacks on, and the sea was no more. Why is it important to say that the sea was no more? In John's vision, his eschatological finale in 21 and 22. The most common suggestion is that the sea was wrapped up with notions of chaos and evil in the ancient world.

Even in the Old Testament, and even other literature, the sea was the place of evil, it was the place of darkness, the deep, it's chaos. You frequently find the sea monsters and beasts associated with the sea. Elsewhere in Revelation, the beast in chapter 13, the beast, which is a chaos monster, evil, emblematic of evil and chaos and hostility, comes up out of the sea.

So the sea is frequently seen in Revelation in light of other texts to indicate chaos. It's symbolic of chaos and evil. So what that means, first of all, is that we shouldn't read this text necessarily as the literal removal of the sea.

I've talked to some people that love the ocean, and they read this text and they get concerned. Is there not going to be any ocean in the new creation? Well, I don't know if there is or not, but one can't use this text to justify it, because sea here is probably being used symbolically in reference to ideas of evil and chaos, that which is inimical and hostile to God and his people and the establishment of God's kingdom. So it has to be removed, so that God's people can enjoy life and enjoy their reward, and God can dwell in their midst, and God's rule, God can reign supreme.

However, I think there's more to it than that. What is interesting, going back to that observation, if you took every Old Testament text away, there would be virtually nothing left. When I read this, I wonder, does this reference to the sea being no more also have an Old Testament background? And my answer to that question is, I think that it does.

And one of the keys is, a number of these texts, in the first eight verses of chapter 21, a number of these texts go back to the book of Isaiah. So, when I first read this phrase, I started looking through Isaiah, because that is a common text that John seems to allude to in these first eight verses, and elsewhere as well, in chapter 21 and 22. So I began to wonder, is it possible that the sea was no more also has an Old Testament allusion behind it, perhaps in the book of Isaiah? And what you begin to notice in Isaiah, that number one, one of the key features of the book of Isaiah is that he draws on the Exodus as a model for how God will restore and save his people, once again, in a new Exodus.

Part of the new Exodus is reference to the disappearance of the sea. Over and over again, you have references, not all of them are directly relevant to what one finds in Revelation, but over and over again, you have references to the drying up of the sea, drying up of bodies of water, that probably reflect the drying of the Red Sea, the removal of the sea that was a barrier to Israel crossing, eventually crossing over into

their land. And the sea was a barrier to that, it was hostile, and it needed to be removed, or it was separated so that people could cross over onto dry land.

But a more specific reference is found in Isaiah chapter 51 and 9 and 10. I think this is one of the most compelling backgrounds for what one reads in Revelation. And again, I'm drawing on the notion that John seems to appeal to Isaiah over and over again, starting with verse 1 of 21, but over and over again, he keeps going back to passages in Isaiah.

So is it possible that the sea is no more should also be read in light of that. 21 and verse 9. Again, when God returns in the future to restore Zion, to bring them salvation. 21 and verse 9. Awake, awake, clothe yourself with strength.

Referring to Jerusalem, the people of God. O arm of the Lord, awake as in the days gone by, as in generations of old. Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces, Rahab being one of these sea monsters, who pierced that monster through? Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made a road in the depths of the sea so the redeemed might cross over? The ransom of the Lord will return.

They will enter Zion with singing everlasting joy will be in their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them and sorrow and sighing will flee away. Interestingly, in this text, Rahab, or the reference to the Red Sea, was it not you who dried up the sea or parted the sea, is associated with Rahab, one of the sea monsters.

So even the original Exodus in Isaiah 51, the original Exodus, the Red Sea, was already associated in Isaiah 51 with chaos and evil. The notions of the deep, the home of the sea monster, that which was inimical to God and his people, that which was chaotic and caused trouble. So in my opinion, now in Revelation 21-1, when John says, and the sea was no more, I think that's part of this Exodus motif.

That what John is saying is in the new creation, God will again, in a new Exodus, he will remove the sea of chaos, of evil, that opposes God and his people, that is inimical to God's people, that is a barrier to God's people crossing over and enjoying their inheritance. God will remove that, as he did in the days of old, as he did in the first Exodus, where the sea was a barrier, a sea of hostility and chaos. Where God dried it up so the people could cross over and eventually enter the promised land.

Now God is going to do that again in Revelation 21. He will remove the sea so the people can cross over and enjoy their inheritance, which is now the new creation in Revelation 21 and 22. In fact, it's interesting, in Isaiah 51, we saw that the result of crossing over and being restored in Zion is rejoicing and singing and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Notice later on, after this statement, the sea is no more, notice how the author says, he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there will be no more death, no mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. That's exactly what happens in Isaiah 51. So I wonder if John, when he says the sea will be no more, I wonder if he's not reflecting this Exodus motif of the drying up of the symbolic Red Sea that indicates chaos and evil, the home of the sea monster, that which is inimical and hostile to God and his people and is a barrier to them enjoying their inheritance.

Now that it is removed and dried up, as it was in the first Exodus, so that God's people can cross over and inherit the promised land, which is now the new earth. To move on to a couple of other texts, chapter 21 and verse 3, interestingly quotes a covenant formula, they will be my people and I will be their God with them. This is probably an allusion to Ezekiel chapter 37 and verse 27, where you find the new covenant formula.

If you go back and read that, you'll find that the wording is very close to Revelation 21 verse 3. But what is interesting is in Ezekiel 37, that new covenant formula is then followed in chapters 40 through 48 by the measuring of the new temple. So you have an angel taking Ezekiel on a tour of the temple and measuring it, measuring its gates and its walls and all the details of the new temple. Interestingly, that's exactly what you find in Revelation.

That following the covenant formula in 21 3, where he quotes Ezekiel 37, right after that, starting in verse 9, John now sees a vision of the new Jerusalem and relying on Ezekiel 40 through 48, an angel takes John to measure, not the temple, but now he measures the new Jerusalem, modeled after Ezekiel 40 through 48. In fact, to even go further, chapter 22, 1 through 5, which says, then the angel showed me the water of life as clear as crystal flowing from the throne of God the Lamb down the middle of the great street, on each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. That language comes right out of Ezekiel 47, 1 through 12.

So virtually this entire section, starting with the covenant formula in 21 3, on to most of the rest of 21 and 22, where John measures the temple, sees the river of life flowing from the throne, the tree of life, and giving leaves that are for healing, all of that is a reflection of and depends on Ezekiel 40 through 48. So Ezekiel 37, 40 through 48, seems to provide a model, an important model, for John's own conception and understanding of eschatological salvation and the restoration. Again, it's even in the same order.

The covenant formula followed by a description of the temple in Ezekiel is reflected in Revelation, where you have the covenant formula from Ezekiel 37, followed by the restoration of and the measuring, not the temple, but of the city. Now, again, that

brings us to the question we said sometimes it's important to ask how an Old Testament text has been transformed. It's interesting that in distinction to Ezekiel, as we've already said, John doesn't measure a temple, he measures the New Jerusalem.

In fact, in chapter 21, John says in his vision, in verse 22, I did not see a temple in the city. So unlike Ezekiel, that has a separate temple in the city, John doesn't see a temple. The reason becomes clear is because now, now that the old creation has been removed, the old creation hampered by sin and evil, now the very thing that made the temple necessary in the first place, now that it's been removed, God can dwell directly with his people apart from the need of a temple.

So therefore, John doesn't see one. In fact, the entire city, the entire people of God are now one big temple that God and the Lamb dwell in directly. So there's no need of a separate physical temple because of human sinfulness.

Now that there's a new creation, now that sin has been removed, now that evil's been removed, now that there's a brand new creation, transformed creation, God can dwell directly with his people in fulfillment of Ezekiel 40-48, but there's no longer a separate temple that is necessary. So for that reason, everything Ezekiel sees and does in relationship to the temple, now John transfers it to the New Jerusalem because the entire city, the entire people of God are a dwelling place of God in a temple, making an additional physical separate temple superfluous in John's final vision. A further example in the same passage of the Old Testament that is not clear necessarily at first glance is as John begins to describe the New Jerusalem in chapter 21, and especially starting in verse 9, he describes it as consisting of 12 gates, and upon those gates are written the 12 tribes of Israel, and then 12 foundations, which have the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb, though he doesn't tell us which tribes or which apostles go with it in these foundations.

He's not interested in that. He just tells us that this New Jerusalem consists of 12 gates with the names of the 12 tribes and 12 foundations with the names of the apostles. He also describes the gates as consisting of pearls, 12 pearls, and he also describes the city as consisting of streets of gold, etc.

So one question to ask is what is the background for all this precious jewel or precious stone imagery in Revelation? First of all, it appears that John is also... One of the things you don't find in Ezekiel 40-48 is any mention of precious stones. So where does John get that? You do find reference to precious stones, particularly in Isaiah chapter 54, a text that we've already looked at, where Isaiah describes the restoration of Jerusalem in the future in terms of precious stones. Its gates are identified with precious stones.

Its foundations are sapphire. Its battlements, the different parts of the city of Jerusalem as it's restored, are equated with different stones. So John appears, and notice that gates and foundations, the gates and the foundations both appear in Isaiah chapter 54.

So John, in addition to Ezekiel 40-48, now he's brought Isaiah 54 in to bring this idea of the restoration will be in terms of these precious, valuable stones and jewels. But it's interesting, as we've said, John identifies the gates as the 12 tribes and the foundations of the apostles. What also John might be doing is he might be doing something very similar to a text we've already referred to, that is the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Isaiah Peshar, where the Dead Sea Scroll community interpreted Isaiah 54 as a justification for their own community.

And what they did, they metaphorically identified the different parts of Isaiah 54, the gates and the foundations, as founding members of the community. Now John appears to be doing something similar by identifying the elements of the city, the

foundations especially, and the gates as founding members, as key members of the new community, the new Jerusalem. Again, the mention of the gates of pearl, this all comes out of Isaiah chapter 54.

So Isaiah's vision of restoration has now been picked up by John. You see what he's doing. He's taking all these Old Testament prophetic texts and their visions of restoration, now he's weaving them together in one grand vision to demonstrate how God's promises, as anticipated in the prophets, now find their climactic fulfillment in God dwelling with his people in a new creation.

Interestingly too, the author goes even further and he identifies, after mentioning that the foundations of Isaiah 54 are actually the foundation stones, are the 12 apostles of the Lamb, he goes on and further identifies them in the rest of this chapter with specific stones. Notice what he does. He says, the foundations of the city, this is verse 19 of Revelation 21, the foundations of the city, which he just said were the 12 apostles of the Lamb, interpreting Isaiah 54.

Now he goes on and identifies them further. The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every type of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz.

I'll stop right there just so I don't stumble on the others. But you get the picture. He goes through the 12 foundations and identifies them with specific stones.

Where else in the Old Testament do you find 12 precious stones playing such an important role? You find that on the ephod of the high priest, the 12 stones on the breastplate of the high priest. You find that in Exodus 28. You find that also, you find an intriguing reference in Ezekiel 28 in verse 13.

You find a very intriguing reference to the precious stones on the breastplate of the high priest. Which, interestingly there, are used in the context of the Garden of Eden. We'll return to that in a moment.

But my point here is, by further identifying the foundations, which are the apostles of the Lamb that John takes from Isaiah 54, by further identifying those 12 foundations as stones on the breastplate of the high priest, from Exodus, in texts like Ezekiel, the author clearly is suggesting, therefore, that all of God's people now function as priests. All of them function as priests who worship God. And perhaps also portraying the city in terms of purity.

But to go back even to make a couple of other comments, it's interesting that one of the precious metals that plays such an important role in Revelation is gold. The city shimmers with, the city is made of gold, the streets of gold. That's made its way into a lot of our popular language and some of our songs, walking on the streets of gold.

Interestingly, there are probably two important references in the Old Testament to this. Number one, in connection with the 12 stones from the high priest's breastplate, which signify the priestly nature of the people of God here, is gold played an important role in the construction of the tabernacle and the temple. So by having gold play a role in the New Jerusalem, especially the streets of gold, this is a way of, yes, showing the incredible beauty of the city, but it's further emphasizing that this place is the dwelling place of God.

This is the fulfillment of the Old Testament temple. This entire city is now a temple where God dwells with his people. But to go back even further, it's interesting that one of the very first references that we find to gold comes way back in the very beginning, and I mean the very beginning, of the Old Testament.

In chapter 2, where the author begins to describe the Garden of Eden that is planted, that Adam and Eve were to take care of, notice in verse 10, A river entering the garden flowed from Eden, and from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is Pishon, it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land was good, aromatic resin and onyx, other precious stones were there also.

Interestingly, he mentions and emphasizes the presence of gold in association with the Garden of Eden. So probably again, by having gold feature in the New Jerusalem, and especially in chapter 22, where the author clearly relying on Ezekiel 47, but notice also in chapter 22, the author mentions the Tree of Life. John mentions not just trees like Ezekiel, but the Tree of Life.

The author wants to make it clear also, by referring to the Tree of Life, by even mentioning gold, which is associated with the Garden of Eden, and it's as if the author wants to make clear, this is not only a restoration or fulfillment of the Old Testament temple, but this is Eden restored, the Garden of Eden. What God intended for His people in the Garden, now is finally restored and fulfilled. God's true intention for humanity, now reaches its climax, by having, by the restored people in the New Jerusalem, which is also portrayed as a temple, and furthermore, as the fulfillment of the Garden of Eden.

To give a couple of other examples to bring us to the end of 22, 1-5, in 22-4, the author describes the people as, says, they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. Again, this is priestly language, of being in the presence of God, seeing His face, the goal of the worshiper in the temple, but also this idea of having His name written on their foreheads. Once again, refers to the priest having the name of God on their foreheads, as they enter the temple.

So there's all kinds of, again, all kinds of Old Testament illusions going on, to present this, to demonstrate that God's intention for humanity, going all the way back to the Garden of Eden, God's intention to create a humanity in whose midst He will dwell in a covenant relationship, now reaches its goal, and its climax. One other interesting thing as well, is that part of the vision that John has is, is the New Jerusalem is an all-inclusive city. Unlike Old Testament texts, where Israel was the focus of attention, now Gentiles participate in this reality as well.

And it's interesting, when John wants to talk about Gentile inclusion, he draws on the Old Testament text that most clearly, Old Testament prophetic text that most clearly envisions Gentiles being included in the ultimate and final restoration of God's people, and that is the book of Isaiah. So for example, in 21, he quotes a number of texts, starting with verse 24, The nations will walk by its light, the light of the New Jerusalem, and kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no more night there.

Another allusion to Isaiah, and perhaps other texts. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it, yet nothing impure will enter it. So John wants to make clear, not only is this the fulfillment of Old Testament prophetic texts, but also in anticipation of Old Testament texts such as Isaiah, it's also inclusive of Gentiles.

So John has brought together a whole host of Old Testament prophetic texts, sometimes colored with Old Testament narrative texts from the Garden of Eden, or from the Exodus, and from those temple narratives, and now combines them into one grand vision of eschatological salvation that God now provides for his people. The final example that I want to draw from in Revelation, comes at the very end of the book, in verses 18 and 19 of chapter 22. We find this interesting reference at the very end of the book, after verse 5, chapter 22 and verse 5, kind of the end of the

final vision, you see a series of final instructions and warnings, instructions to John, and instructions as to how the book is to be received, and how it is to be responded to.

In verses 18 and 19 we read this, I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes away from them, from the book of the prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life, and the holy city, which we just read about in 21 and 22, which are described in this book. Now, usually this verse is taken as a reference to a warning against tampering with the book of Revelation, and not adding, sometimes adding more books to the New Testament or Old Testament canon, or taking books away, or with Revelation we shouldn't take words out or add sections.

And usually when we think of verses 18 and 19 of Revelation 22, we often apply this to other cults and false religions that add to the Bible, and they're guilty of adding to and subtracting from, and that is doing violence to the completed canon of Scripture. So that's often how 18 and 19 is taken. Seldom do we ever give a second thought to whether this text applies to Christians or not.

Usually it's taken as applying to outsiders, who are in danger of tampering with or adding to or subtracting to the book of Revelation, or the finished canon of Scripture. However true all of that may be, and however much John may have utilized this to some extent to warn against actually tampering with the book, and adding and subtracting to it, I think that we need to read this again in light of this New Testament background. That is, John is not the first one to talk about adding to and subtracting from the word of God, or from his book.

In fact, I'm convinced that he is drawing from a language that comes right out of the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, in reference to the Old Testament law. For example, Deuteronomy chapter 4 and verse 2. And I'll read verse 1 as well.

Deuteronomy chapter 4. Hear, O Israel, the decrees and the laws that I am about to teach you.

Follow them so that you will live and may go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you. Now here's verse 2. Do not add to what I command you, and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you. Furthermore, Deuteronomy chapter 12 and verse 32.

We find something very similar. Deuteronomy chapter 12 and verse 32 reads again in the context of the Mosaic covenant and keeping the law. Verse 32.

To back up, 29 and 30 has warned them, The Lord your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by going after false gods or their gods, saying, How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same. You must not worship, or you must not worship the Lord your God in their ways, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates.

They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices of the gods. Verse 32. See that you do all I command you in the law.

Do not add to it, or do not subtract to it. In my opinion, John gets this language of adding to and subtracting from the word of God, of his book, of his prophecy at the very end of Revelation 22, from the text of Deuteronomy, which is in the context of

obeying the Mosaic law. So what is interesting too is that in both places, when they are told not to add or subtract, that is the opposite of keeping it.

In other words, the Israelites are told, don't subtract or add to the law, but be careful to keep it. In other words, I think that adding and subtracting are not so much concerned with just adding words or taking words away, literally, with an eraser, erasing some of the words or writing extra laws or words, but instead that adding to and subtracting have to do with failure to obey the word of God. Whether one adds further, adds something else in addition or as an additional requirement, or takes away from it by refusing to keep it, to add to and subtract to the law, according to Deuteronomy, somehow was bound up with the Israelites actually obeying it.

And so when we get to Revelation 22 and 18 and 19, when he warns them against adding to and subtracting from it, I think he's using it in the same way as Deuteronomy. That is, don't add or subtract to the book. That is, do not substitute something else, especially idolatry.

It's interesting that in chapter 12 of Deuteronomy, it was in the context of not going after idols. So to add to the book might be to pursue idolatrous practices. To take away from the book would be to neglect it and ignore it and refuse to do it.

So in either case, when John then says, I warn everyone who hears the words of this prophecy, do not add to them and do not take away, I take it that it's primarily referring to obedience to the book. Adding to and subtracting is sort of a metaphorical way of saying don't pursue idolatry, especially perhaps for the context of the readers of Revelation, the worship of pagan gods and emperor worship, that would be adding to the book. Don't subtract from it by refusing to obey it and ignoring it and shrinking away from it, as some were prone to do.

It's interesting, too. What I think adds to this is, you know, in verse 18, he says, I warn everyone who hears the words of this book. Who would have heard the word of the book? It would have been Christians.

This is addressed to God's people, not to outsiders, not to pagan observers or pagan worshippers or false teachers or false religions or cults. This is addressed to God's people. They are the ones in danger of adding to and subtracting from the word of God.

In fact, these verses, 18 and 19, I think provide a bookend with chapter 1 and verse 3 of Revelation to help make more sense of this. Chapter 1 and verse 3, John says, Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, which would have been, this would have been the person who actually read it to the congregation. Most New Testament books would not have been passed around and everyone read them.

It would have been read by someone, and the gathered congregation would have listened to it. So notice 3 again. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and keep it.

Keep the things written in it, because the time is near. So chapter 1 begins with a blessing for the one who hears the word of God and who keeps it and does what it says. Yet now, the book ends with a warning and a curse for those same persons who hear the words of this book, yet they fail to keep it.

Those who do so are guilty of adding to and subtracting from the word of God. That is, again, those who hear the word read, who refuse to put it into practice, who refuse to obey it, and perhaps shrink back from it because of pressure from the Roman government, or those who would instead substitute idolatrous religious practices by worshipping pagan gods and even the Roman emperor. They are the

ones who are guilty of adding to and subtracting from the word of God at the very end of the book of Revelation.

So actually this text, again, Christians should see in this text not a condemnation of false teachers and cults and other religions, but this is addressed to God's people. It reminds us of the danger of failing to keep the word of God, and instead the necessity of not only hearing it and listening to it, but doing what it says and conforming our lives to it. So those are a number of examples from the New Testament ending with the book of Revelation.

A number of examples where not only is there a challenge in identifying the Old Testament texts and the necessity of identifying the Old Testament text that lies behind the New Testament, but the need to go further and ask, how does that affect the way I interpret the New Testament text? What difference would it make if I read Revelation 21 and 22 without all of those Old Testament texts in mind or lurking in the background? So one must move behind simply identifying Old Testament passages and validating whether the author intended the illusion or not, and justifying finding an illusion and wondering whether it's certain or probable or possible. One needs to move beyond that and ask as well, what might be the interpretive implication of this? What difference does it make to find an Old Testament illusion in this text, as opposed to if I did not see one? And to make clear, what is the theological, what is the hermeneutical import of the Old Testament illusion? So that brings us to our discussion of the Old Testament in the New, and again, an important facet of the interpretive process that again has the potential of yielding important interpretive insight. In the next session then, we'll move on to consider a couple of other features related to aspects of the interpretive process, one of those being theological interpretation, interpreting the text not just historically critically, but also interpreting the text theologically as the scriptures of

the people of God, and also asking questions about contextualization and application along with that.

And then I intend to draw our discussion to a conclusion by doing two things, by perhaps putting together a methodology, what would an interpretive method look like, implementing all these principles, and then actually illustrating that by working through a couple of biblical New Testament texts to show how these principles can work.