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BIBLICAL STUDIES

THE NARRATIVE MULTIVERSE WITHIN THE UNIVERSE OF THE BIBLE: THE QUESTION OF "BORDERLINES" AND "INTERTEXTUALITY"

Gary Edward Schnittjer

I. *Introduction*

A beginning does not mean that it is the first thing in the sense that nothing comes before it. It is the beginning in reference to whatever comes after it. It is the beginning of something. In narrative literature, and here I am interested in biblical narrative, a beginning is one of the edges, borderlines, boundaries, horizons, or the like, of the narrative context itself. Do the borderlines of the scroll, including the beginning, define *the* context for interpretation in the case of the meaning of narrative? This question can be considered in relation to many things, but for my present purposes I wish only to think about the relationship of story and echo.[1] Biblical narratives contain echoes which seem to invite, simultaneously, reading within the boundaries of the scroll or book itself and crossing the scroll's edge to read the narrative in relation to other biblical writings which can be "heard" in it.

The problem which prompted this study was born by uniting basic observations concerning what is often called, within biblical hermeneutical studies, "intertextuality" and the set of interpretive questions related to "context." That is, how do literary echoes affect context? Defining context in order to render interpretation is necessary, and yet, seems to be defied, in certain senses, by intertextuality.

Again, a beginning, at least one within the human realm, never starts in a vacuum. There is always something else, something before it. A beginning, in the case of a narrative, is so, according to the conventions associated with Aristotle's thinking on tragedy, as well as epic and comedy, because of its relationship to what comes after the beginning, namely, the whole or the middle and end.[2] I am going to use, as others have, Aristotle's idea of beginning and end,

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[1] I will here say "echo" to refer to the literary signals of retrospective intertextuality.

[2] See Aristotle, *Poetics* (Halliwell, LCL), bk. 8 (esp. p. 55). For an interpretation of *Poetics* in relation to narrative theory or emplotment, see Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer; 3 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1:31-51.

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with a middle inherently related to the beginning and end, as indicative of narrative in general. The borders of the narrative itself are delineated by the interrelated beginning, middle, and end.

Although it may be tempting to claim that the edges of the scroll containing the narrative define the outer limits of the story's context, the echoes within this context reach outside of it. Texts contain echoes which reach beyond the context of the book itself.[3] I think Jacques Derrida identifies, yet overstates, the problem when he says, "No one inflection enjoys an absolute privilege, no meaning can be fixed or decided upon. No border is guaranteed, inside or out. Try it."[4] While I think Derrida's point here, in the context of literature in general, is in the right direction, I am interested in a much more limited hermeneutical issue, specifically, biblical intertextuality and the borderlines of biblical scrolls. In the reading of biblical narrative, is the context defined by the edges of the scroll, the connections via echo to other biblical scrolls, both/and, none of the above, or something else?[5]

There are many reasons to focus on the way that echo relates to narrative context; these include the nature of biblical narrative itself, the relationship between context and meaning, and the nature of the canonical collection of writings. I will deal with the issue of echo and context as it relates to biblical narrative, according to each of these three. Other matters, including many which are important, will have to be passed by in the interests of exploring and testing the following provisional hypothesis: The biblical reader can rightly appreciate multiversal biblical narrative contexts only from within the universe of the scriptures. Biblical context, according to this hypothesis, has some borders that cannot be crossed and others that must be crossed. Knowing where and how to cross borderlines is the magic of good interpretation. After exploring this

[3] The relationship a plot may have with something before it is among the reasons why Aristotle noted that the beginning does not "necessarily" follow something else but is the beginning of what follows (see ibid.).

[4] Jacques Derrida, "Living On: Border Lines," in *Deconstruction and Criticism* (ed. Harold Bloom et al.; trans. James Hulbert; New York: Seabury, 1979), 78. The entire shape of "Living On: Border Lines," including one text running along the top and another in the bottom portion of the page, as well as its discussion, challenges many assumptions about the meaning of context and its relationship to the idea of the book; see esp. 78-89. Derrida is most associated with one of the terms he coined, "deconstruction." For a "systematic" introduction to Derrida's thought, regarded by many as the best of its kind, see Geoffrey Bennington, "Derridabase," in *Jacques Derrida* (trans. Geoffrey Bennington; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). The format of this work is similar to "Living On: Border Lines" in that Bennington's "Derridabase" runs on the top portion of the pages and Derrida's "Circumfession," which, in part, is an attempt to defeat Bennington's treatment, runs on the bottom of the pages. For a helpful discussion of Derrida's views on context, see "Derridabase," 84-98. For an anthology, see Peggy Kamuf, ed., *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). Also see David Wood, ed., *Derrida: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

[5] Derrida does not think that "context" as such can contain meaning; see Craig G. Bartholomew, "Uncharted Waters: Philosophy, Theology and the Crisis in Biblical Interpretation," in *Renewing Biblical Interpretation* (ed. Craig Bartholomew, Colin Greene, and Karl Möller; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 23.

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hypothesis in the threefold manner described above, I will illustrate these matters in two case studies and conclude with some of the implications of these findings.

II. *The Nature of Biblical Narrative*

The nature of biblical narrative, most notably its fundamentally "allusive character," invites readers to juxtapose against and include within its story multiple other biblical contexts.[6] The many textual parallels, whether allusions or quotations, within biblical narratives lie at the heart of the adventure of scripture reading. Before dealing with this issue positively, two distinctions need to be made.

First, parallelomania needs to be avoided.[7] What constitutes a legitimate echo versus imagined similarities on the part of too-zealous readers? How much confidence should we place in our view of which context "influenced" the other? Patience and caution, rather than premature interpretation or interpretive zealotry, should characterize any kind of comparative literary study.

Second, innerbiblical intertextuality is different, in kind and degree, than either later Christian typology or rabbinic midrashim. It is necessary briefly to compare and contrast biblical midrashic narrative to both of these developments. In one sense, both Christian typology and rabbinic midrashim can trace their origins into the biblical text itself. At the same time they each, in different ways, are more than just exaggerations of innerbiblical midrashic interpretation because of their respective places within their postbiblical religious streams of traditions.

Christian typological interpretation runs across a spectrum from only acknowledging "types" or "patterns" which are explicitly named as such in the New Testament, like the first and second Adam in Romans 5, to extravagant comparisons which seek to demonstrate, for example, how each aspect of the Tabernacle is a type of the Christ.[8] In North American evangelical circles, and

[6] Robert Alter, in a context to which we will return, twice refers to the "allusive character" of the Hebrew Bible, see "Introduction," in Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, eds., *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1987), 13.

[7] Samuel Sandmel wrote, "We might for our purposes define parallelomania as that extravagance among scholars which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying a literary connection flowing in an inevitable or predetermined direction" ("Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 [1962]: 1). Stanley E. Porter engages several definitions and discussions regarding the nature of "intertextuality" and its relationship to "allusion" and "echo." Porter concludes that although a nod is often given to methods, being too conscious of method is a burden in practice. Minimally, it appears that many scholars attempt to avoid "parallelomania." See "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology," *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel* (ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders; JSNTSup 148; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), esp. 80-88.

[8] For standard treatments see Leonhard Goppelt, "*tupos,*" *TDNT* 8:246-59; Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (trans. Donald H. Madvig; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982 [Ger. 1939]). In the latter work Goppelt defined: "Only *historical facts*—persons, actions, events, and institutions—are material for typological interpretation. . . . These things are to be interpreted typologically only if they are considered to be *divinely ordained* representations of types of future realities that will be *even greater or more complete*" (17-18, emphasis mine).

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perhaps other contexts, extreme typological interpreters still exist (evangelical students sometimes refer to their professors with this parallelomanic bent as "hyper-typers"). Navigating between the extremists on both sides of the Christian typology spectrum—from those who see too little to those who see too much—is not new.[9]

A difference, perhaps the key difference, between New Testament typological readings of the Hebrew scriptures and later Christian typology is the existence of the New Testament itself. Whereas New Testament writers retroactively read forward-looking patterns within the Tanak in relation to their understanding of the Christ, later Christian typologists christocentrically compared texts between the two testaments of their Bible.

Defining "midrash" has proved difficult. I will here use Brevard S. Childs's definition: "Midrash is, above all, an interpretation of a canonical text within the context and for the religious purposes of a community, and is not just embellishment of tradition. Midrash can be related in different degrees of closeness to the literal meaning of the text, but what is constitutive of midrash is that the interpretation does attach itself to a text."[10] From the perspective of

Goppelt contrasted typological to allegorical: "Careful study of the individual passages reveals that the NT use of Scripture, whenever it is not directly literal, should be considered typological rather than allegorical. An allegory is a narrative that was composed originally for the single purpose of presenting certain higher truths than are found in the literal sense. . . . Allegorical interpretation, therefore, is not concerned with the truthfulness or factuality of the things described. For typological interpretation, however, *the reality of the things described* is indispensable. The typical meaning is *not really a different or higher meaning, but a different or higher use of the same meaning* that is comprehended in type and antitype" (13, emphasis mine).

[9] Jonathan Edwards, the colonial Puritan, argued that there was a danger both by imagining types where none were intended as well as not seeing the types that were there. On the one hand he wrote that "persons ought to be exceeding careful in interpreting of types, that they don't give way to a wild fancy; not to fix an interpretation unless warranted by some hint in the New Testament of its being the true interpretation" ("Types," in *Typological Writings* [ed. Wallace Anderson et al.; Works of Jonathan Edwards; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993], 11:148). On the other, he stated, "If we may use our own understandings and invention not at all in interpreting types, and must not conclude anything at all to be types except but what is expressly said to be and explained in Scripture, then the [Old Testament believers] . . . when the types were given, were secluded from ever using their understanding to search into the meaning of the types given to 'em" (11:150). Edwards hoped for a balance: "There is a medium between those that cry down all types, and those that are for turning all into nothing but allegory and not having it to be true history; and also the way of the rabbis that find so many mysteries in letters, etc." (11:151).

[10] Brevard S. Childs, "Midrash and the Old Testament," in *Understanding the Sacred Text: Essays in Honor of Morton S. Enslin on the Hebrew Bible and Christian Beginnings* (ed. John Reumann; Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson, 1972), 49. Also see Brevard S. Childs, "Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis," *JSS* 16 (1971): 137-50. Gary G. Porton uses a similar definition of midrash (see "Midrash," *ABD* 4:818-22). Concurring with Porton, Jacob Neusner wrote, "Ranging over boundless plains of meanings imputed to the word *midrash,* from '*anything but* the plain meaning of Scripture,' to '*everything said* about Scripture' or any particular verses of Scripture, Porton comes to a simple definition: 'Midrash [is] a type of literature, oral or written, which stands in direct relationship to a fixed, canonical text, considered to be the authoritative and revealed word of God by the midrashist . . . and his audience, and in which this canonical text is explicitly cited or alluded to' " (Jacob Neusner, *Midrash in Context: Exegesis in Formative Judaism* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983], xvi-xvii). Porton's definition has become somewhat standard also being quoted in, for example, H. L. Strack and G. Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (trans. Markus Bockmuehl; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 256.

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rabbinic midrashim, perhaps the innerbiblical midrashic tendencies can be seen as a beginning of this enterprise. The differences between biblical and postbiblical midrash within this stream of traditions are also evident.[11]

The roots of the kinds of midrashic interpretation found in Christian typology and rabbinic midrashim reach back into the Tanak itself.[12] The Septuagint, early targumim, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and Qumran documents, are, each in different manners, among the examples of Second Temple Judaic literature which extended different aspects of midrashic interpretation embodied within the Tanak.[13] The collection of writings in the New Testament, in ways similar to and different from these other second temple writings, likewise extended midrashic readings found within the Hebrew Bible as well as initiating new ones. The fundamental difference for the New Testament's interpretations of the Tanak was that the word of God was interpreted in relation to the new revelation of God in Jesus, and vice versa.

Biblical narratives often echo other biblical contexts; that is, again, they evidence an allusive character."Biblical echo within narrative" is another way of

See Gary G. Porton, "Defining Midrash," in *The Study of Ancient Judaism* (ed. Jacob Neusner; vol. 1 of *Mishnah, Midrash, Siddur;* New York: Ktav, 1981), 1:55-92, esp. 66-67. For selected critique of Porton's treatment of midrash see Herbert Basser, review of Gary Porton, *Understanding Rabbinic Midrash, CBQ* 49 (1987): 123-24. Also see James L. Kugel, "Two Introductions to Midrash," *Midrash and Literature* (ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986), 93-96. Martin McNamara, *The Aramaic Bible* (ed. Kevin Cathcart, Martin McNamara, and Michael Maher; Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier), 1A:29; Philip S. Alexander, "The Rabbinic Hermeneutical Rules and the Problem of the Definition of Midrash," *PIBA* 8 (1984): 97-115; David Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1992). Also see Jacob Neusner, "History and Midrash," in *History and Torah: Essays on Jewish Learning* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 17-29; Saul Lieberman, "Rabbinic Interpretation of Scripture," *Essential Papers on the Talmud* (ed. Michael Chernick; New York: New York University Press, 1994), 429-60; Philip S. Alexander, "Quid Athenis et Hieroslymis? Rabbinic Midrash and Hermeneutics in the Graeco-Roman World," in *Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History* (ed. Philip R. Davies and Richard T. Whitem; JSOTSup 100; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 101-24; Merrill P. Miller, "Targum, Midrash, and the Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament," *JSJ* 2 (1971): 61.

[11] For an introduction to midrashim within the context of the rabbinical writings at large, see Jacob Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1994).

[12] See Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985); Geza Vermes, "Bible and Midrash: Early Old Testament Exegesis," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans; 3 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 3: 199-231. For a review of Fishbane's work see James A. Sanders, review of Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, CBQ* 49 (1987): 302-4. Rabbinic midrashim and Christian typology are each postbiblical interpretive traditions which relate, on the one hand, to their religious theological traditions, and, on the other, to their respective bibles, namely, the Tanak, especially the Torah (written and oral), and the Old and New Testaments. The innerbiblical midrashic readings, or intertextuality, which are the object of the present study, are not identical with either of these postbiblical hermeneutic traditions. New Testament typological interpretation is, in my view, only one kind of midrashic reading which maintains continuity with the same tendencies within the Tanak.

[13] For an accessible collection of second temple midrashic readings of the Pentateuch, see James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible As It Was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

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saying "midrashic narrative."[14] The echoes are the effects of reading other biblical contexts and applying them, in one manner or another, to the contexts within which the echoes can be heard. When readers hear an echo of a biblical context within, for example, a biblical narrative, the boundaries or context of the one inherently includes the other within itself. The echo, or midrashic interpretation, can be viewed as an invitation to biacoustically hear both contexts as essential components of the context within which the echo resounds.[15] Biacoustical hearing, or reading, would mean one literary context contains within it an allusion to one other literary context, and, I suppose, triacoustical reading would mean two contexts were alluded to in a third. The fundamentally allusive character of biblical narrative, as well as other kinds of biblical writings, is rarely so confined. The reality is that often the context of origin for the biblical echo itself contains other echoes which, in turn, also contain still other echoes. The essential allusive quality of biblical narrative is, therefore, by nature polyacoustic and often leads readers into networks of connections and interrelationships.

If, in fact, biblical narratives contain allusions to other biblical contexts, and if narratives, indeed, create worlds for readers to "enter," then the "narrative world" of a particular biblical scroll or book cannot be conceived of as a "universe" unto itself. The idea of a universe includes a closed system. It is conceivable, in a possible world, that there might be a connection between two different universes, but this is not the nature of biblical narrative that is described above. If a universe necessarily contained within it, as a part of it, other universes, then it is a multiverse. Below I will deal with the issue of whether or not biblical intertextuality goes on forever, and thus has no ultimate context, but here I simply want to make the point that the allusive character of biblical narrative itself demands that the context of the narrative exceeds the boundaries of the scroll. The issue of limits, if there are any, will be taken up with the question of canon below.

III. *The Relationship Between Context and Meaning*

The nature of the relationship between context and meaning, whatever it is, maintains direct bearing on the significance of the matters related to narrative echo. If meaning is determined by, or in some way related to, context, then a different understanding of context carries with it important hermeneutical issues. The many attendant aspects of the perennial question of meaning fall outside the aims of the present study. For my present purposes it is enough to say that, as any first-year student of biblical hermeneutics would say, the meaning of

[14] I am purposefully avoiding the noun "midrash" in favor of the adjective "midrashic" to avoid confusion between biblical interpretive techniques and the postbiblical genre of rabbinic writings just discussed.

[15] I am not here referring to the question of the so-called singularity or plurality of "meaning." I will touch on the questions of the polyphonic and polysemic qualities of language below. My concern at this point is with the "hearing" or reading of multiple elements within a given context.

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a given biblical text, whether a word or a scroll, is related to its context. There is, in my view, a relationship between context and meaning. For me, context shapes meaning. It is not important, at this juncture, to try to demonstrate this point; rather, my purpose here is to unravel how the biblical narrative multiverse affects any search for meaning that is, in some way, bound by context.

A common assumption, in many circles, is that the scroll or book is the primary meaningful context, yet, in the case of biblical narratives, the scroll maintains a relationship to the other scrolls. The scroll, in my view, is one important way, but not the only way, to approach the context of a text.[16] While the biblical studies enterprise may favor the scroll because of education and publishing habits, other contexts are not inherently excluded. Jeffrey H. Tigay noted, "Since interpretation depends on context, and division of the text helps define context, it is important to get as close as possible to the way ancient readers divided the text."[17] The contexts in which biblical narratives viewed other (con)texts include the biblical story-line as a whole, books, persons (the story of given characters), weekly Torah and Prophets readings, pericopae, paragraphs, sentences, verses, and words.

The scroll-exceeding contexts inherent within biblical narratives by virtue of echo raise a host of hermeneutical concerns. These issues, which are often discussed by evangelicals, include the relation of authors and texts, authorial intentionality, and the singularity versus fuller or plurality of meanings.[18] The issue of context is often assumed within the subtext of various competing evangelical positions. These are insecure and in some cases faulty assumptions. To speak of an author's intentions or singularity of meaning implies, not too subtly, that the context in question can be confined to the author's writing or at least to a particular writing. The edges of the scroll, however, do not mark the outer limits of narrative context. Echoes cross the borderlines of the scroll and include other, "external" contexts within the narrative's "interior."

Are there any limits that can be placed on the context of biblical narratives? In my view, the context defined by canon puts one kind of outer limit on biblical intertextuality.

[16] See Everett Fox, "Can Genesis Be Read as a Book?" *Semeia* 46 (1989): 31-40; Rolf Rendtorff, "Is It Possible to Read Leviticus as a Separate Book?" and Graeme Auld, "Leviticus at the Heart of the Pentateuch," in *Reading Leviticus: A Conversation with Mary Douglas* (ed. John F. Sawyer; JSOTSup 227; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 22-35 and 40-41; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *The Pentateuch: An Introduction to the First Five Books of the Bible* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 43-45.

[17] Jeffrey H. Tigay, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), xi.

[18] See, for example, Scott A. Blue, "The Hermeneutic of E. D. Hirsch, Jr. and Its Impact on Expository Preaching: Friend or Foe?" *JETS* 44 (2001): 253-69; Robert H. Stein, "The Benefits of an Author-Oriented Approach to Hermeneutics," *JETS* 44 (2001): 451-66. For a discussion of singular versus multiple meanings, especially contrasting aspects of E. D. Hirsch's and H. G. Gadamer's works, see Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist* (New York: Seabury, 1980), 205-12. Also see David J. A. Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch* (2d ed.; JSOTSup 10; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 130-33; Paul Ricoeur refers to "excess of signification," see *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, Tex.: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 55.

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IV. *The Nature of the Canonical Collection*

The nature of the canonical collection of writings creates a boundary within which to read the biblical scrolls, albeit narrative or otherwise, in relation to themselves or to the other biblical scrolls which can be heard echoing within them. Before I describe what sort of border the canon offers to biblical readers it may be useful to consider the question of context as a boundary in any sense of the word. In this area Umberto Eco has offered significant challenge to radical reader-oriented approaches including Derrida's. I will briefly introduce (nothing more is possible here) selected aspects of Eco's thought on context in general for interpretation and use this as a backdrop for biblical canon as interpretive borderline.

Narratives, like other oral traditions and written texts, are open to different readings. Eco memorably states, "a novel is a machine for generating interpretations."[19] Eco opposes views in which a "text is seen as a machine that produces an indefinite deferral" of meaning, in favor of the idea that "it can mean many things, but there are senses that would be preposterous to suggest."[20] That is, while Eco maintains that texts can and do mean many things, there are boundaries for "legitimate interpretation" transgressing beyond which causes "overinterpretation."[21]

What are the "limits," according to Eco, that (should) confine interpretation? Context, broadly defined, and any community of interpreters. First, for Eco, "A text is a place where the irreducible polysemy of symbols is in fact reduced because in a text symbols are anchored to their context."[22] In discussing biblical interpretation Eco illustrates that whereas the lion can serve as a figure of the Christ and the devil, the contexts are not open to any interpretation.[23] Second, Eco argues that the consent of any community of interpreters can agree, and thus establish, that certain interpretations are not contextually legitimated. By this he does not suggest that knowing either the author's original intention nor a singular meaning are possible. Rather, within the context of texts which are open to multiple legitimate interpretations, some interpretations can be excluded by the community.[24] I want to qualify Eco's point here in relation to "any community of interpreters." Perhaps "illegitimate" interpretations can be

[19] Umberto Eco, "Postscript," in *The Name of the Rose* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1983), 505.

[20] Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1990), 2, 5; Umberto Eco, "Interpretation and History," in *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (ed. Stephan Collini; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 43. Also see *Limits of Interpretation,* 27.

[21] See *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, e.g., 9, 16, 141.

[22] Eco, *Limits of Interpretation*, 21. Again, he wrote, "A given text reduces the indefinite possibilities of a system to make up a closed universe" (Umberto Eco, "From the Internet to Gutenberg," lecture at the Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America [12 November 1996], n.p.; online: www.hfontnu.no).

[23] See Eco, *Limits of Interpretation,* 13.

[24] See ibid., 41-42. Perhaps Ludwig Wittgenstein would have said that a message or meaning is incomprehensible without a community context (i.e., the problem of "private language"). See Saul A. Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 107-13.

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rejected from a community, but communities do not speak for those outside of themselves.[25]

The two limitations which Eco proposes for interpretation in general can be used, in a modified form, in relation to biblical reading. First, although the context of biblical narratives cannot be identified as synonymous with the edges of the scrolls in which they are written because of their intertextual relationships with other biblical writings, biblical echoes do not extend beyond canonical boundaries. The canon itself is the ultimate determinative realm of meaning for biblical texts including narratives. The canon defines the universe within which the reader can traverse between narrative worlds. Thus, the narrative multiverse of the scriptures exhibits its interconnectivity within the innerbiblical sphere of the canonical context. The idea of canon leads naturally to the matter of community.

Second, canon is a function of community. To say "the Bible" is to refer to a particular collection of writings regarded as scripture by a community of faith. The Protestant Bible, the scripture of my own community of faith, presently is functionally constituted of the Masoretic Text and an eclectic Greek New Testament (NA27/UBS4).[26] There are other bibles, but this is the canonical collection of writings regarded as authoritative—God's word—by the practicing communities of faith within the Protestant stream of traditions.[27] Those who embrace only the King James Version are, of course, an exception. The canon is that body of writings which functions authoritatively within the life of the church.[28]

The canon is the edge of the authoritative context for innerbiblical intertextuality. When biblical narratives are linked inherently to other biblical contexts via echo, these other contexts become part and parcel of the context within

[25] "*Anything* can be said," wrote George Steiner, "about *anything*" (*Real Presences* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989], 53). The fact that overinterpretations exist attests that, minimally, extracommunity readings migrate into places where they are not welcome.

[26] There are problems with referring to the "original autographs" as the inspired text. Most notably is the frequent use of the Septuagint versus the Hebrew Text by the New Testament writers which suggests a more fluid, or, at least, different, view of "inspired text." There are also problems with referring to the "final form" of the text; see Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 75-77; and James A. Sanders, *Canon as Paradigm: From Sacred Story to Sacred Text* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 166-71.

[27] My view of the manner in which canonical awareness should inform biblical reading or the theological enterprise runs along the lines of Childs's work, with significant qualifications like some of those offered by Sanders and Watson. Along with numerous articles, see esp. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* and his *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992). For significant assessments of Childs's work see Sanders, *Canon as Paradigm,* 153-74; Francis Watson, *Text, Church and World: Biblical Interpretation and Theological Perspective* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 30-45. Watson, in my view, makes an important contribution to biblical theological approach in *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

[28] See Brevard S. Childs, "Interpreting the Bible Amid Cultural Change," *ThTo* 54 (1997): 210-11; Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture,* 41-42, 61, 67. Also see R. T. Beckwith, "The Canon of Scripture," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 27-34.

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which the echo is embedded. Often the echoed context has still other biblical echoes embedded in it, thus forming an entire network of innerbiblical intertextual relations which bear on context and meaning. The echoes stop, in relation to authority, at the edge of the canonical collection. The issue is authority.[29]

The allusive character of the biblical texts was created among "disparate texts," according to Alter, by the "retrospective act of canonization."[30] For the critic of literature in general the allusive unity of the canonical collection is an artificial construct. The force of this idea is evident, on the one hand, among biblical specialists who are willing to think in terms of the theologies of the individual scrolls but not of the theology of a larger collection like the New Testament.[31] In this view, the scroll, not the canon, is the final arbiter of meaning. The idea of canon, on the other hand, does not stop those outside the community of faith from regarding the quality of intertextuality in general as one that endlessly interconnects the biblical writings to extrabiblical writings and thus with everything. Kevin Vanhoozer, for example, writes that intertextuality, in the broad sense of the word, "explodes" the idea of canon.[32] The scriptures, of course, include plentiful allusions to extrabiblical literature. This, however, does not explain the nature of biblical intertextuality.

Biblical intertextuality as a phenomenon differs from intertextuality in general in kind and degree. It differs in kind by being more subtle and, ultimately, far reaching. "The strong elements of internal allusion in the Hebrew Scripture that at many points make it a set of texts in restless dialogue with one another," wrote Alter, "is something that goes beyond what is ordinarily thought of in strictly literary terms as intertextuality."[33] Biblical intertextuality also differs in degree from intertextuality in general, namely, in terms of referring exclusively to its interrelations with other authoritative, or canonical, writings.

When I refer to "the universe of the scripture," I am talking about a faith context for biblical reading. The phenomena exhibited by the biblical narrative multiverse only function for authoritative meaning within the parameters of the universe of the Bible. At this point the dynamics of crossing the borders of the scroll within the boundaries of the canon need to be illustrated.

[29] See Corrine Patton, "Canon and Tradition: The Limits of the Old Testament in Scholastic Discussion," in *Theological Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Brevard S. Childs* (ed. Christopher Seitz and Kathryn Greene-McCreight; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 75-95, esp. 94.

[30] Alter, "Introduction," 13.

[31] See Luke Timothy Johnson, with Todd C. Penner, *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation* (rev. ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 611; Francis Watson, "Gospel and Scripture: Rethinking Canonical Unity," *TynBul* 52 (2001): 162.

[32] See Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 134-35. Later in this book Vanhoozer affirms innerbiblical intertextuality along the lines of what I am arguing in the present study (see 263-65). In this latter context, Vanhoozer does not use the word "intertextuality," but in private correspondence he assured me that it is intertextuality in its limited innerbiblical sense that he has in mind.

[33] Alter, "Introduction," 31.

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V. *Two Case Studies*

Two case studies will illustrate two ways that narrative echo forces readers to a context beyond the bounds of the scroll. First, I will consider the relation of the individual scrolls to two series, namely, the Primary Narrative (Genesis through Kings) and the Secondary Narrative (Chronicles–Ezra–Nehemiah).[34] The focus will be on connections across the beginning edge of the scroll, thus both situating the narrative itself within a larger story and changing the ending of the preceding narrative. Second, I will use Matt 3:16–4:4, part of two adjacent episodes, to illustrate how echo brings the reader into another narrative world by bringing another narrative world into the first. That is, this example demonstrates one of the ways that the borderlines of the scroll are crossed in the middle to form a context constituted by a network of innerbiblical intertextuality. In neither case study am I attempting anything like a full exegetical reading. My purpose here is to illustrate the issues related to context and scroll discussed above.

First, the Primary Narrative is at once nine stories in nine scrolls and one story. A story is a whole beginning with a beginning and ending with an ending. Yet, stories within a series are connected to narratives before their beginnings and after their endings. The issue is hermeneutical.[35] Since context shapes

[34] I use the terms "Primary Narrative" and "Secondary Narrative" rather than "Primary History" and "Secondary History" coined by David Noel Freedman and Joseph Blenkinsopp, respectively. For the former, most recently, see David Noel Freedman, *The Nine Commandments* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), ix; for the latter, see Blenkinsopp, *Pentateuch*, 34.

[35] Some of the same issues are evident in discussions of commonly invoked scroll groupings such as, for example, the Torah and Former Prophets implied within the idea of the Tanak itself. The Tanak reading is challenged, at some level, by those that promote the Tetrateuch and Deuteronomistic Narrative or by the idea of the Hexateuch. By foregrounding one or another of these contexts, a given text, say the book of Deuteronomy, is regarded differently within its own collection, whether it is the end of the Torah, the beginning of the Deuteronomistic Narrative, or in the middle of the Hexateuch. These changes not only alter context, and thus any meaning related to that context, but moreover realign which echoes should dominate reading Deuteronomy. For Hexateuch, see Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (trans. D. M. G. Stalker; 2 vols.; New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 1: 296-305; Jacob Milgrom, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), xvi-xviii. For Tetrateuch and Deuteronomistic History, see Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1972); Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist;* also see Blenkinsopp, *Pentateuch*, 17. On the Tanak order, see Nahum M. Sarna, "The Order of the Books," in *Studies in Jewish Bibliography, History, and Literature in Honor of I. Edward Kiev* (ed. Charles Berlin; New York: Ktav, 1971), 407-13. For a survey of the variations of the arrangements of the Tanak see "Bible," *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* (1971) 4:816-32; Roger T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 450-68. There are variations in the arrangements of the Writings (*Kethuvim*)—sometimes Chronicles is first and at other times it is last. It seems plausible that New Testament writers knew of the arrangement of the Writings which is attested in the BHS. The mention of "Torah, Prophets, and Psalms" in Luke 24:44 may see the Psalter at the head of the Writings and Jesus' statement in Matt 23:35 likely places Chronicles last—hence, the MT/BHS order. Also see Roger T. Beckwith, "Formation of the Hebrew Bible," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading, and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Martin Jan Mulder; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 39-86.

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meaning, what is the context for determining meaning in a biblical serial narrative? I will consider the significance of crossing the beginning and ending edges of the scroll in turn.

The relationship of the book of Joshua to the Pentateuch illustrates how the reader must cross the boundary of the beginning to interpret the story. The echoes within the book of Joshua reach across the beginning edge of the scroll, thus situating the story. In chapter one the Torah is a scroll that functions within the story world of the book of Joshua: "**This book of the law** shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with **all that is written in it**" (1:8). The study of the Torah scroll—whether the book of Deuteronomy or the entire Pentateuch—is one of the several echoes of Deuteronomy chapter thirty-one.[36] Joshua chapter one situates the Torah scroll in the story, thus reaching beyond its beginning. In chapter twenty-four Joshua retells the pentateuchal story, from the calling of Abraham to the encampment on the transjordan, yet does not stop at the end of it but includes as part of the story the narrative within the book of Joshua itself (Josh 24:2-13). Joshua's hexateuchal summary effectively extends the narrative beyond the borders of the scroll in chapter one, and, at the same time, offers itself as the ending of the story which began beyond the River in Genesis chapter eleven. The Torah scroll of Joshua chapter one, then, is both a discrete context and, yet, necessarily unfinished without the portion of the Joshua-story that completes it. It was complete until the book of Judges reopened it and pointed out the incompleteness of the conquest of the book of Joshua, thus continuing the series (see Judg 1–2).

The relationship of the book of Genesis to the rest of the Primary Narrative, not to mention the rest of the Bible, demonstrates the multiperspectival aspects of the beginning of Genesis in relation to many endings simultaneously. The book of Genesis itself opens with the "beginning days" (ch. 1) and closes with the "last days" (49:1). The story that begins with the creation of the human world and ends with an expectation for the coming of the Judah-king has many elements that frame it and give it a sense of literary closure (the following list is partial).

Adam/Human was made from earth, granted life, and exiled from the garden (2:7; 3:24)	Jacob/Israel was returned to the land and interred (50:13)
The humans are exiled from the garden (3:24)	The families of Israel leave the land and settle in Egypt (46:8)
The snake deceived to incite rebellion (3:4-5)	The lion will rule to secure obedience (49:9-10)
The seed of the woman will crush the head of the seed of the snake (3:15)	The Judah-king will, with his hand on the neck of his enemies, secure dominion over them (49:8)

[36] See Deut 31:24; also see Deut 31:7-8 = Josh 1:5-7.

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God destroyed humankind with a worldwide flood (6:17)	God through Joseph saved the peoples from worldwide famine (41:54)
Cain killed his brother (4:8)	Joseph forgave his brothers (50:21)
God is the life-giver (chs. 1–2)	God is recognized as the life-taker (50:19; cf. 30:2)

Although Genesis is comprised of two sections, namely, the beginning of humankind and the beginning of the chosen family, these two parts are cohesively united in a single book.[37]

Genesis is but the first of the Five Books of Moses. The beginning starts this collection of stories that closes with Moses' death and an expectation for the coming of a prophet-like-Moses. The relationship includes not only verbal parallels, like the "hovering eagle" of Deut 32:10-11 with Gen 1:2 and Exod 19:4, but also commands which determine life and death (Gen 2:17; Deut 30:11-20). Also Deuteronomy's forward-looking outlook expects the kind of moral failure which characterized the antediluvian world (Gen 6:5; Deut 31:21, 27).[38]

The book of Genesis also begins the story that ends with the fall of Jerusalem—the Primary Narrative. This narrative opens and closes with an exile to the east of the garden and the land of promise respectively. David Noel Freedman has suggested that the stories within the opening chapters of Genesis summarize the experience of Israel recounted in the Primary Narrative. The story comes full circle when Babel, which disappeared from view at the close of the primeval history, reappears at the end of Kings—from Babel to Babylon.[39]

Each scroll that was added to the Primary Narrative series crossed the previous ending and created a new sense of a whole story with the beginning in Genesis. The net effect is that the book of Genesis serves as the beginning of many narrative contexts at the same time.

A more complicated example beckons the reader of the Secondary Narrative, so named because it retells the story of the Primary Narrative. While the Secondary Narrative rewrites or retells the entire story (Chronicles), along with its sequel (Ezra–Nehemiah), of the Primary Narrative, it does not do so independently. The Secondary Narrative assumes a working knowledge of the Primary Narrative in order to understand it, or at least to understand many of the elements within it.[40] The Secondary Narrative, therefore, provides an exemplary case in which the nature of the echo demands simultaneously regarding multiple contexts or multiple interpretations of the same events in order to read the story. The context for the Secondary Narrative is more than itself; that is, the echoes force the reader to embrace a reading context beyond the edges of its scrolls in order to apprehend the meaning of the story within it.

[37] See Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (New York: Norton, 1996), xliii-xlvii.

[38] For a discussion of the parallels between Genesis and Deuteronomy, see Terence E. Fretheim, *The Pentateuch* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 56-63.

[39] See Freedman, *Nine Commandments,* ix-x.

[40] For a list of passages in Chronicles that demand the reader's prior knowledge of the Primary Narrative, see Steven L. McKenzie, "The Chronicler as Redactor," in *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture* (ed. M. Patrick Graham and Steven L. McKenzie; JSOTSup 263; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 81-85.

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Second, when Matt 3:16–4:4 is read within the context of the First Gospel, these verses fall at the end and beginning of the episodes of the baptism and the temptation respectively. My focus, therefore, is selective based upon my present purpose. My concerns begin with Jesus' use of Deut 8:3 as an invitation to consider this context in light of another. Even a cursory reading of these two contexts side by side demonstrate that more is going on in the Gospel narrative than a mere account of the "facts" of Jesus' life. When a reader listens closely to Matthew's story another story can be heard in it.

> And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "***This is my Son,*** the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." Then Jesus **was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted** by the devil. He fasted **forty days and forty nights**, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "*It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*" (Matt 3:16–4:4)[41]

> This entire commandment that I command you today you must diligently observe, so that you may live and increase, and go in and occupy the land that the LORD promised on oath to your ancestors. Remember the long way that **the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart,** whether or not you would keep his commandments. He humbled you by letting you hunger, then by feeding you with manna, with which neither you nor your ancestors were acquainted, in order to make you understand that *one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.* The clothes on your back did not wear out and your feet did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that ***as a parent disciplines a child so the LORD your God disciplines you.*** (Deut 8:1-5)

An explanation of the meaning of the relationship between these passages will have to be postponed temporarily in order to focus upon the significance of the fact of the relationship itself. Not all the potential parallels suggested here are of the same sort; some may be fortuitous.[42] It is enough, at this point, to say that something is going on.

[41] Translations from the NRSV unless noted otherwise.

[42] Other pentateuchal passages could also be brought to bear on Matt 4:1-3 like those referring to Moses' forty days of fasting (see Exod 24:18; 34:28; Deut 9:9, 18; 10:10). Compare Moses' and Jesus' forty days of fasting before bringing the Ten Words and Sermon on Mount, respectively. While these comparisons may function to some extent in the background of the Matthean narrative, I follow the reading of the comparisons as primarily between Jesus and Israel in the wilderness. For a discussion of comparing Matthew's Jesus to Israel (versus Moses), see, e.g., William David Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (3 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–97), 1:358-59; Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 165-72; Tertullian, *De bapt.,* 20. On Matt 4:1-11 as a comparison between Jesus and Moses, see Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 54-55.

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Matthew 4:4 quotes the Septuagint translation of Deut 8:3 and uses, in some fashion, its context.[43] It is not simple "midrash" because it is more than interpretation. The Gospel narrative offers new revelation which is somehow related to the Torah. It is also not "typological exegesis" in the later Christian sense of the word.[44] An ontological analogy is being drawn between the acts of God in these two contexts.[45] Again, it is the existence of New Testament passages, like Matthew chapters three and four, that made possible, rightly and/or wrongly, later varieties of Christian typology. For the moment this story can be thought of as proto-midrashic or proto-typological in character. Recognizing that Matt 3:16–4:4 has a midrashic-typological relationship to Deut 8:1-5, and that the Gospel narrative interpreted the events of Jesus' story in light of this other context provides a helpful first step. A minimal implication for Matthew chapters three and four, even if a reader opened no other scrolls, is that the context of Deuteronomy chapter eight is inherently a part of it. Asked negatively: how can the meaning of Matt 3:16–4:4 be grasped within the context of the Matthew scroll itself without regard to the source of the echoes? It cannot, at least, not fully.

The next step, specifically, discovering that the context of Deuteronomy chapter eight extends to other scrolls, springs from the unique position of the book of Deuteronomy within the context of the Primary Narrative. The book of Deuteronomy is the heart and its parallels the cardiovascular system of the Primary Narrative. Deuteronomy relates to the rest of the Pentateuch in that it is, among other things, a reading of the Tetrateuch (Genesis through Numbers). The Former Prophets or the Deuteronomic Narrative (Joshua–Judges–Samuel–Kings) tell the story of the rise and fall of the Hebrew kingdom within the shadow of the book of Deuteronomy. These general observations about Deuteronomy and the Primary Narrative are especially relevant to Deuteronomy chapter eight and need to be considered in turn.

The interpretations of the wilderness accounts in Deuteronomy chapter eight overlap those in chapter six.[46] This observation, although it cannot be taken up here, is particularly important because Jesus quoted Deut 6:16 and 6:13 in the face of the second and third temptations, respectively (Matt 4:7, 10). Deut 8:1-5 (as well as chapter six) is an interpretation of the provision of manna in Exodus chapter sixteen, (which really needs to be considered along with the related passages in the book of Numbers).

> Remember the long way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, **testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments.** (Deut 8:2)

[43] For a discussion of the slight modifications of Deut 8:3 LXX in Matt 4:4, see Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:363-64.

[44] It also seems somewhat anachronistic, to me, to refer to this context as a "haggadic tale" or "haggadic narrative" (see ibid., 1: 352-53).

[45] See Brevard S. Childs, "Interpretation in Faith," *Int* 18 (1964): 442-43.

[46] Note Deut 8:1-6 = 6:16-19; 8:7-20 = 6:10-15. See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991), 396-97.

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> Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. **In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not**." (Exod 16:4)

The fact that some in Israel failed this test can be seen in Exod 16:20, 27.[47]

The idea expressed in Deut 8:5—"Know then in your heart that as a parent disciplines a child so the LORD your God disciplines you"—was echoed in the version of the Davidic covenant found in the Deuteronomic Narrative: "I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings" (2 Sam 7:14). The discipline that God would mete out on the seed of David was the effect, in this context, of his fatherhood to him. Thus, as Israel so the son of David, God's disciplinary action symbolized his fatherhood.

The fact that discipline symbolized the seed of David as the son of God extends the intertextual connections even further because it was precisely this point that was reinterpreted by other biblical versions of the Davidic covenant.[48]

> I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. **When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings.** But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. (2 Sam 7:14-15)

> I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever. (1 Chr 17:13-14)

The deletion in the Chronicler's version of the Davidic covenant probably relates to the different storylines, themselves reflecting different theological emphases, of the failure of Solomon in the Deuteronomic Narrative (see 1 Kgs 10:26–11:13 with Deut 17:16-17) and the Chronicler's faultless Solomon.[49]

The part of the Davidic covenant that was omitted from the Chronicler's version was read another way in the second psalm. In this context it is not God who will discipline his son, but the son will bring judgment upon the nations. The psalmist's poetic reinterpretation of the Davidic covenant, in my view, appears to read-together the Davidic covenant with allusion to a combination of pentateuchal passages offering hope for the coming Judah–king and conquering–ruler, namely, Genesis chapter forty-nine and Numbers chapter twenty-four.

> I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. **When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by**

[47] See Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 92.

[48] Other biblical versions of the Davidic covenant include Pss 89:3-4, 30-37; 132:11-12. Also see Ezra 9:7-9; Neh 9:32-37.

[49] See Jacob M. Myers, *I Chronicles: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 12; New York: Doubleday, 1965), 126-27; Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles* (WBC 14; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1986), xxxii-xxxv, 199.

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human beings. But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. (2 Sam 7:14-15)

I will tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to me, "You are my son;
today I have begotten you.
Ask of me, and I will make ***the nations your heritage,***
and the ends of the earth your possession.
You shall break them with a rod [*shebet*] of iron,
and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." (Ps 2:7-9)

Judah, your brothers shall praise you;
your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies;
your father's sons shall bow down before you.
Judah is a lion's whelp;
from the prey, my son, you have gone up.
He crouches down, he stretches out like a lion,
like a lioness—who dares rouse him up?
The **scepter** [***shebet***] shall not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
until tribute comes to him;
and **the obedience of the peoples is his**. (Gen 49:8-10)

He crouched, he lay down like a lion,
and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? (Num 24:9; of the coming king from Balaam's third oracle)

I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near—
a star shall come out of Jacob,
and a **scepter** [***shebet***] shall rise out of Israel;
it shall crush the borderlands of Moab,
and the territory of all the Shethites.
Edom will become a possession,
Seir a possession of its enemies,
while Israel does valiantly.
One out of Jacob **shall rule,**
and destroy the survivors of Ir." (Num 24:17-19; from Balaam's fourth oracle)

One can guess that the psalmist considered the coming Judah–king of Genesis chapter forty-nine and the Davidic covenant's son of David one and the same. The creative element here, it seems to me, was combining together the imagery from both the coming Judah–king and star from Jacob and applying this combination to the benefactor of the Davidic covenant. Whereas Solomon, according to the Deuteronomic account, would be disciplined as God's son, the anointed one of the second psalm would, as God's son, be the inheritor and judge of the nations.[50] Moreover, these factors along with the shift from a covenant about the son of David (third person) to a poetic covenant with the son of God/

[50] If Ps 2 is in fact reading together the Davidic covenant with the expectations of Gen 49 and Num 24, the use of "Edom" (*ʾdm*) in Num 24, as elsewhere, was taken as representative of "Adam"/ humankind (*ʾdm*). On the interpretation of Edom as Adam in the Acts 15 use of Amos 9, see Luke

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David (second person), in part, may account for the New Testament writers favoring the version of the Davidic covenant in the second psalm.

The parallels between God disciplining as a son both Israel in the wilderness and the promised seed of David, in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic Narrative respectively, are not the only connections along these lines between Deuteronomy chapter eight and the rest of the Hebrew scriptures.[51] Deuteronomy 8:5 can be heard in Proverbs 3:11-12 in which "Solomon" tells his "son" that "the LORD reproves the one he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights." The application of this context in Proverbs to the readers of the letter to the Hebrews highlights discipline as the sign of being a legitimate son of God.[52] The interrelationships between Deuteronomy chapter eight and other contexts within the Tanak and New Testament need to be put aside for now in order to attend to the context of Matthew chapters three and four.

What is the context of Matt 3:16–4:4? This question must be answered to interpret the meaning of this passage. The context includes the entire narrative world of the Matthean Gospel account. The narrative world can and should be assessed according to its historical context, including the life-setting of the historical Jesus, the evangelist, and his community, as well as the literary and theological relationships between this text and its parallels in the Gospels of Mark and Luke. The biblical echoes within the story, especially the re-sounding of Deut 8:1-5, however, extend the narrative context of Jesus' baptism and temptation stories beyond the edges of the Matthew scroll. The context of Deuteronomy chapter eight (and chapter six), which itself is an interpretation of the wilderness stories of Exodus, becomes an inherent part of the narrative world of the First Gospel.[53] The reader must commute between these interconnected narrative worlds in order to interpret the meaning of the story of Jesus here. The echoes are not merely sounds in the new story; they are thresholds leading

Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1992), 265 n. 17. For interaction with the various names in Num 24, see John H. Sailhamer, "Creation, Genesis 1–11, and the Canon," *BBR* 10 (2000): 99-101.

[51] Many contexts use the father–son imagery of God and Israel. Most interesting for the present study are those contexts that focus on Israel as the wayward son of God, particularly Hos 11:1-4 and Jer 31:18-20 ("When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. The more I called them, the more they went from me. . . . I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them" [Hos 11:1, 2a, 4]. "Indeed I heard Ephraim pleading: 'You disciplined me, and I took the discipline; I was like a calf untrained. Bring me back, let me come back, for you are the LORD my God'. . . . 'Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he the child I delight in? As often as I speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore I am deeply moved for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD' " [Jer 31:18, 20]). Considering whether or not it is coincidence that both of these contexts are used within Matt 2-4 (2:15, 18) must be set aside here. For postbiblical readings of Israel as God's son, see Kugel, *Traditions,* 663-64, 701-3.

[52] See Heb 12:4-13, esp. 12:5-6 = Prov 3:11-12; Heb 12:13 = Prov 4:26.

[53] I agree with Davies and Allison on this point: "The OT context of the NT quotation thus defines its meaning. Without a knowledge of Deut 8.1-10, the point of Mt 4.4 is necessarily lost" (*Matthew,* 1:363).

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into other story worlds. The new story, in this case Jesus' temptation following his baptism, is inherently multi-contextual.

The various echoes in Matthew chapters three and four seem to me not only to be making a comparison between Jesus and Israel in the wilderness, although they do. It appears that these echoes are interpreting Jesus' story within the broader context of selected innerbiblical readings of Deuteronomy chapter eight. The following summary, based upon the above comparisons, is oversimplified, but I think in the ballpark, for the sake of illustration. The most instructive comparisons between Deut 8 and Matt 3 and 4 are the differences, which reveal that Jesus, the son, is unlike God's son Israel: Whereas Israel was tested in the wilderness and failed, Jesus lived by the word of God; whereas Israel's sonship to God was defined by discipline because of the failed test, the Father pronounced his good pleasure with his beloved Son prior to the wilderness temptation; Jesus' temptation revealed to the tempter and to readers what God had already proclaimed after the baptism.[54] This perhaps can be accounted for in Matthew's Gospel in light of the literalization of the messianic sonship through the virgin birth. Jesus, the son of David (Matt 1:1), was the Son of God in a sense that effectively exceeded the biblical expectations for the Davidic seed.[55] The meaning is not different but fuller and in line with prior biblical readings. Jesus, in Matthew's Gospel, was not disciplined by God for his failures like Israel or Solomon; he was different from them at the same point that the biblical expectations differed (see discussions of 1 Chr 17 and Ps 2 above).

VI. *Summary and Conclusion*

The end of this study will be devoted to summarizing the results from the three areas of measuring the hypothesis and listing selected interpretive issues that these findings affect. The respective natures of biblical narrative itself, the relationship between context and meaning, and the canonical collection of writings appear to confirm the hypothesis that the biblical reader can rightly appreciate the multiversal biblical narrative contexts only from within the context of the universe of the Bible.

First, the allusive character of biblical narrative forces the reader to engage other contexts which can be heard echoing within them. The reader who will not cross the borderline of the scroll will not hear the other worlds already present in the narrative. The allusive quality of biblical narrative should not be

[54] For a brief discussion of the dissimilarities in light of the similarities, see Donald A. Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (ed. Frank E. Gaebelein; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 8:12.

[55] The point on sonship is not materially affected by understanding the voice's statement, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased," as an echo of the son-messiah from Ps 2 or of the servant from the servant songs of the book of Isaiah. Preferring the Ps 2 allusion, see Donald Alfred Hagner, *Matthew 1–13* (WBC 33A; Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 58-59; preferring a conflation of allusions including Ps 2 and Isa 42:1, see Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:336-39 (also see 1:330); Carson, "Matthew," 8:109-10.

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confused with the postbiblical varieties of typology and midrash. Second, the nature of the relationship between narrative and meaning is such that biblical echoes within narrative defy quests for meaning within the scroll as the limiting context. Third, the nature of the canon creates boundary for the context of authoritative meaning. The idea of canon provides a self-limiting context, at least in terms of authority. The idea of canon also assumes within itself a community for whom the canonical collection of writings function as God's word. These three matters were illustrated by case studies on the Primary and Secondary Narratives and Matt 3:16–4:4.

Biblical narrative is, by its very nature, multiversal. This does not mean that it means everything or even that it can mean anything. It means something in its immediate context and something-more in its broader biblical contexts. The multiverse of biblical narrative does not speak different meanings, but levels of meaning, when read within the confines of the universe of the Bible. The beginning and end of a biblical narrative do not signify that the story consigned therein is a world unto itself. Biblical narratives are part of the innerbiblical intertextual network which must be navigated by readers in the right manner. The narrative multiverse within the biblical universe is, in this sense, irreducible. The stories cannot be detached or boiled down to propositional statements. The skill of reading biblical narrative, in large part, relates to the reader's abilities to travel through the worlds within the canonical world.

What are some of the implications of these findings?

(1) The evangelical intramural discussions regarding authorial intentionality and/or single meaning which ignore the issues of context in general, including the impact of echo on context, cannot achieve satisfactory resolution. It is not just that the discussions of authorial intent often fail to adequately account for the divine and human relations in authorship,[56] but the intentions themselves are related to a text that is interrelated to a network of previous and later biblical texts which necessarily impose on the rhetorical effect of the scroll itself.

(2) An overemphasis upon either the world in front of or behind the text—synchronic versus diachronic approaches—restricts the potential significance of interpretation. These hermeneutical emphases each can be more complementary if their approaches are text-oriented.[57] This study reveals, in part, the inadequacy of traditional historically-oriented approaches that read particular scrolls without full consideration of their biblical contexts.

(3) The strength of the book-as-context approach within biblical studies, as significant as it is, contains within it a weakness. Biblical interpretation is not complete if the results only treat the meaning of the individual books of the

[56] For a helpful view of the prospects and problems of some of the evangelical discussions along these lines, see Scott Swanson, "Can We Reproduce the Exegesis of the New Testament?" *TJ* 17 (1996): 67-76.

[57] Donald K. Berry wrote, "It is time for scholars to seek an explicit combination of the diachronic and synchronic readings of all biblical texts" (review of Raymond de Hoop, *Genesis 49 in its Literary and Historical Context, Bib* 82 [2001]: 274). Also note Sanders's suggestive approach; for example, see *Canon as Paradigm,* 171-72.

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Bible. Mastering the content of a particular scroll, or even all the biblical scrolls as scrolls, can only be an intermediate achievement. This study has demonstrated that the nature of narrative itself breaks the bounds of the scroll. Thus, to interpret a scroll includes interpreting the scroll within its larger context. The other extreme, namely, reading biblical passages only within the context of the entire canon (or the entire Tanak or New Testament), also is in itself incomplete. Interpretation needs to also work with the media contexts between those of individual scrolls and the entire canon. Specifically, the contexts determined by the networks of innerbiblical intertextuality must also be regarded as a primary context of study.

(4) The hermeneutics of biblical narrative need to consider multiple contexts simultaneously. The Primary and Secondary Narratives offer important examples of this point. The individual contexts of the nine scrolls of the Primary Narrative need to be appreciated in their own right; yet neither this nor regarding the Primary Narrative as a whole is enough. There are within the Primary Narrative other scroll groupings which merit attention based on the internal connections of the narratives with larger sections of the entire narrative. The Tetrateuch, Pentateuch, Hexateuch, Deuteronomic Narrative, Primary Narrative, and the individual scrolls of Genesis through Kings, are not mutually exclusive interpretive contexts. While not every scroll grouping is necessarily legitimate, multiple groupings are advocated by the internal connections within and between the books themselves. Moreover innerbiblical intertextuality in the form of midrashic narrative also insists on reading contexts together.

(5) The polysemic character of language itself is among the reasons that the same writings can be read differently.[58] The polyphonic possibilities of the Hebrew scriptures are realized when read within the authoritative frameworks of the Oral Torah or the New Testament by rabbinic Judaism and Christianity, respectively. The argument I am making here is not that the biblical narrative multiverse should be regarded as polyphonic—the biblical writings themselves only say different things if they are read within different authority-contexts (like the Judaic Written and Oral Torah or the Protestant Bible)—but that the simultaneous contexts of the narrative multiverse invite legitimate polyacoustic reading only within the limiting universe of the Bible.[59] Thus rightful "surplus of meaning" is not different meanings—polyphonic—but extensions of the meaning—polyacoustic—through innerbiblical intertextuality. The biblical canon itself excludes the polyphony of individual texts,[60] that is, texts saying

[58] This is basic to hermeneutic approaches which work in the wake of Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory of linguistics (semiology is the general science of signs), see *Course in General Linguistics* (ed. Charles Bally et al.; trans. Roy Harris; Chicago: Open Court, 1983 [Fr. 1915]).

[59] *Contra* the view that the Hebrew scriptures should be embraced as polyphonic, see Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 732-35.

[60] Thus to speak of the "biblical polyphony" refers to the voices of the various writers and writings, but the individual biblical writings cannot be, by definition, polyphonic. "Integral to the concept of the scriptural canon is the idea of its 'unity' or 'coherence'. A canon is not an anthology,"

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what they are saying and also saying something else, yet endorses polyacoustic hearing, namely, readers can hear texts saying something and hear it saying more about the same self something within a greater innerbiblical intertextual context. The polyacoustic narrative multiverse within the confines of the canon relates to what traditionally has been known as "progressive revelation."

(6) The priority of reading the Bible with the Bible must take its place among the skills of biblical readers. Again, I am not promoting the arbitrary or unwarranted juxtaposition of multiple contexts. Rather, biblical echoes, at least in the case of narrative, invite, and in some cases demand, that given contexts be read in light of other contexts.[61] The context of biblical narratives, in my view, includes both crossing the beginning and end borders of the serial scrolls and more distant interconnectivity between the middle of one scroll and another, each when these interrelations are licensed by echoes. The intuitive skills of reader competency need to be gained by, among other things, thinking outside the boundaries of the scroll.

wrote Francis Watson, because the individual human authors "also share in an overarching divine authorship, so that what Jeremiah or John says is also what God says" ("Gospel and Scripture," 161, 163; also see 164-65).

[61] Christopher R. Seitz wrote: "A fresh intellectual horizon for Old Testament studies is the rediscovery of the complex network of intertextuality that binds all texts together, not only in their canonical shape in the Old Testament, but more especially as this intertextuality is taken up and filled to fullest capacity in the New" ("The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness: Inscribing a Theological Curriculum," *ThTo* 54 [1997]: 223).

Disputes regarding the internal consistency and textual integrity of the Bible have a long history. Classic texts that discuss questions of inconsistency from a critical secular perspective include the Tractatus Theologico-Politicus by Baruch Spinoza, the Dictionnaire philosophique of Voltaire, the EncyclopÃ©die of Denis Diderot and The Age of Reason by Thomas Paine. Narrative intertextuality shows the importance of stories shaping the way we. think and the way we express ourselves. 2.2.2 Continuity and discontinuity. Narrative intertextuality not only involves continuity but also some measure. of discontinuity, for the ancient story is both â€œdisruptedâ€ and â€œregeneratedâ€. when used in new and perhaps unforeseen situations. Against those who.Â Paul must address Jewish possession of the law and circumcision, supposed to be identifiers of the Jews as a people enjoying the benefits of. a special status before God. By undercutting Jewish reliance on the. covenant of the law (2:17-24), questioning the value of circumcision. when the law is broken (2:25-27), and specifying meaningful. circumcision as circumcision of the heart (2:28-29), Paul in effect. This universe within universe idea also crops up in Hinduism. The Bhagavata Purana contains a story of Lord Krishnaâ€™s youth. After being accused of eating dirt, Krishnaâ€™s mother looks inside his mouth and sees the entire universe. When he was a child, Krishna's mother opened his mouth and saw the entire universe. Getty. These ideas grapple with the fastness of the multiverse, but also its interconnectedness. â€œAll phenomena, from the macro to the micro, is the hologram-like expression of the ultimate nature of the universe,â€ says Sensei Stultz. â€œThe true nature of the self is not the trans