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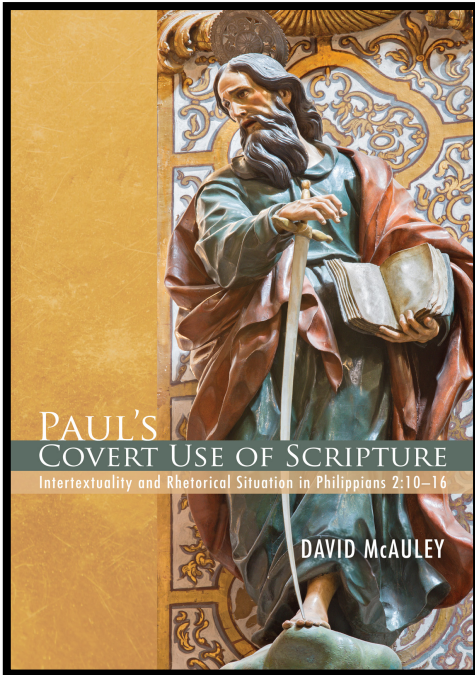
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**New Title from David McAuley**

*Paul's Covert Use of Scripture*

*Intertextuality and Rhetorical Situation in Philippians 2:10–16*



*Paul's Covert Use of Scripture* challenges the scholarly consensus about Paul's use of the Old Testament and counters claims and assumptions that have retarded extensive investigation into Scripture's presence in this particular letter. The book describes the results of an investigation into why and how Paul uses Scripture (Old Testament) in Phil 2:10-16. The purpose of the study has been to test the suggestion that a cluster of tacit references to specific books of Scripture embedded by Paul functions as a group of literary allusions that are integral or foundational to his epistolary argument. The finding of the research is that the problem in Philippi is the disinclination to accept suffering and death as intrinsic to gospel citizenship. Furthermore, a single, central theme, "God's approval of suffering and death for the sake of Christ," is the crucial intertext that brings the whole letter into unity and significance. The issue of how to deal with tacit references to Scripture in Philippians would seem to have reached an impasse. Currently, no interpretation of Philippians satisfactorily explains Paul's infusion of a cluster of "covert" references in Phil 2:10-16 whilst giving an economical account of the range of formal, semantic and linguistic conventions in Phil 1:27-3:1-21. Until now, scholarly efforts to discover congruence between the contexts of Philippians and the Old Testament have rested on a heuristic approach focusing on surface-level themes and facticities recorded in Paul's text, with mixed results. There has been little engagement with available theoretical or methodological platforms to assist exegesis. In this investigation McAuley sets

forth a new theoretical and exegetical framework that draws on insights from theories of intertextuality, allusion and rhetorical situation and is unique in using the latter as a hermeneutical constraint in the interpretation of intertextual allusions to Scripture in Phil 2:10-16.

**David McAuley** is a visiting lecturer in New Testament, and itinerant preacher. He earned his BSc in computing from the University of the West of Scotland, Paisley, his BA in theology from International Christian College, Glasgow, and his PhD in biblical studies from the University of Aberdeen. Before undertaking theological study, he worked for IBM in engineering, consultancy, and management.

*Paul's Covert Use of Scripture*

*Intertextuality and Rhetorical Situation in Philippians 2:10–16*

by David McAuley

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## Interview with David McAuley

### Why did you write this book?

With a deep interest in the Bible's portrayal of Jesus, I was naturally attracted to the high Christology of Phil. 2:5-11 – this hotly-debated passage of Scripture quickly became a favorite. Investigation into the pre-existence, incarnation, death, resurrection, and enthronement of Jesus led me to question how the passage functioned in Paul's argument – Paul's letters are rhetorical, not just statements of Christology. Uppermost in my mind was Paul's depiction of the magnitude of Jesus' condescension, and how he employed this as a fitting response to a community problem in Philippi. In other words, what might have caused, or threatened, disunity in the Philippian church, to require such condescension from the deity as a solution? After reading Richard Hays' seminal treatment of intertextual echo in his book, "Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul," I was drawn to the burgeoning field of study that focused on NT authors' use of OT texts. Subsequent to further research, I was alerted to the possibility of a cluster of indirect references (allusions) to several books of the OT in Phil 2:12-16. Including the well-known reference to Isa. 45:23 in Phil 2:10-11, Paul has clustered together five allusions to OT texts in just seven verses of Philippians – a very high "Scripture density index" indeed. Gordon Fee aptly described the passage as "quite unique and unlike anything else in the Pauline corpus." My interest was aroused further when I discovered that, despite the continued attention of scholars to the growing field of biblical studies known as "the Old Testament in the New," there had not been any substantive study or monograph published on Paul's use of the Old Testament in his letter to the Philippians. My book seeks to fill this gap.

### What's different about your book?

New Testament scholars interested in Paul's use of Scripture have not found Philippians to be particularly rich in material for examination. One reason is that Philippians contains only tacit references (allusions) to Scripture. The claim, or assumption, that quotation is somehow a superior category to allusion still seems to permeate scholarly thinking, and has curbed extensive investigations into Scripture's presence in Philippians. In contrast, Paul's use of the Old Testament through the use of overt, citation/quotation is well-trodden ground with several books in print. However, investigations of Paul's use of the OT that focus exclusively on formal citations omit relevant data that may affect the conclusions reached about his thought, theology, ethics, eschatology and exegetical method, to name but a few. For example, I propose that Paul intentionally alludes to the OT because of the explicit relatedness between the texts. Yet, this relatedness cannot be detected by a surface-level reading of Philippians. A new approach is required - one which seeks to recover the crucial, unwritten intertext that gives significance, not only to the 5 intertextual allusions, but the letter as a whole. To my knowledge, *Paul's Covert Use of Scripture* would be the first book to offer an in-depth analysis of Paul's use of the Old Testament in this particular letter. In particular, it is the first book to treat situational rhetoric, allusion and intertextuality as complementary theories and methodologies in an interpretation of a New Testament letter. As such, it would offer a distinctive and broader hermeneutical approach to that proposed in books focusing on intertextuality and Paul's hermeneutical method, monographs that use rhetorical criticism to analyze Paul's letter to the Philippians, and commentaries on Philippians.

### For whom was the book intended?

The book is my doctoral dissertation, so the main readership would be scholars, theologians, lecturers and students working and researching in the field of theology, biblical studies and hermeneutics. This audience needs to keep abreast of current research, advances in theories, methodologies and interpretations that facilitate ongoing research. *Paul's Covert Use of Scripture* would be an important teaching resource for academic skills development since the subject area is widely taught and researched. Although the book engages in Greek exegesis and the application of literary theory, subsidiary, yet not insignificant, readership would comprise non-academics and non-specialists: for example, authors, church ministers, and pastors who are able to recognize the book as a source of critical commentary on the New Testament – they would use the material for writing, teaching, preaching and pastoral ministry. Indeed, I have developed an 8-week preaching series, derived from the thesis of the book.

## Interview with David McAuley

### **What do you hope people will take away from reading the book?**

I hope people will consider a new and fresh interpretation of Philippians, and re-evaluate their views on Paul's use of Scripture – in particular, how and why he alludes to Scripture. Let me suggest just two ways the book attempts to achieve this. Firstly, by helping readers understand the terminology and process of allusion, its relationship to citation, author-intentionality, author-audience intimacy and audience competency. Secondly, by helping readers to understand how epistolary argument (rhetorical situation) can be used to control the intertextual patterning produced in the processing of literary allusions in a NT letter. Thus, the book uses a synthesis of historical, literary, and rhetorical methods to propose a new reading of Philippians.

### **What issues affecting NT study are you seeking to address in the book, and are they unique to Philippians?**

In writing the book I have taken a “case study” approach that focuses on Philippians, because of the unique cluster of tacit references to the Old Testament in Phil 2:12-16 and their close proximity to Phil 2:5-11. However, other Pauline letters include passages that contain clusters of Old Testament fragments (Romans and Galatians), so I see no reason why a similar approach taken in the book cannot be considered for some of Paul's other letters. In particular, there are six issues relating to the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament that have emerged from observations drawn from the text of Philippians, and a survey of previous approaches to the interpretation of allusion in Paul's letters:

1. How are allusions detected?
2. How are allusions defined and interpreted?
3. What special consideration, if any, should be given to the interpretation of a cluster of successive allusions, most of which occur in a single sentence?
4. Given that intertextual allusion is a form of tacit reference, how can its interpretation be reasonably (exegetically) constrained?
5. What role should audience recognition and authorial intention play in our analyses of Paul's use of allusion?
6. What role does epistolary argument play in the interpretation of allusions?

I believe questions 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 would be relevant to any NT epistle containing allusions to any precursor text... such as an OT text.

### **How does the book contribute to a theology of Philippians?**

In the book, I suggest that Philippians is an apocalyptic theodicy. My thesis is that the divisions in the church at Philippi spiral around God's apparent passivity while his people suffered. Refusal to accept that the deity would approve (in some sense) his people's suffering is the major defect that Paul seeks to modify. Not that God approves of suffering *per se*, but that God approves, and even orchestrates, stable and unalterable circumstances incorporating suffering. This explains Paul's emphasis on God's participation in suffering, and the warnings against a tendency to self-preservation. I think the story of Christ in Phil 2:5-11 is pivotal for the theodicy perspective – God allows suffering because he, himself, must participate in it. Thus, the key rhetorical function of Phil 2:5-11 is not to express humility, to vindicate the suffering-faithful or as an exhortation to unity, but to justify God's approval of suffering. Theologically, and apologetically, my intertextual reading of Philippians affirms that God has a morally sufficient reason for allowing suffering in his universe. Paul carefully and deliberately crafted five allusions to Scripture in order to address those Philippians disinclined to accept suffering and death as intrinsic to gospel citizenship.

## An Excerpt from *Paul's Covert Use of Scripture*

Most NT exegetes who have analyzed the five passages in the rhetorical unit broadly agree on the summary of their meaning as follows. Phil 1:27–30—“unity”; Phil 2:1–4—“unity”; Phil 2:5–11—“vindication”; Phil 2:14—“manward/Godward grumbling”; Phil 3:1–21—“boasting.” As argued in our exegesis, these summaries do not adequately account for Paul’s rhetoric and his broader interests in the epistle, nor do they offer an explanation for the cluster of Scripture references in Phil 2:10–16. Our exegesis has produced an alternative set of “summaries.” We have identified five controlling exigencies derived from a rhetorical exegesis of Phil 1:27–3:21: the refusal to accept that God would approve of his people’s suffering for the sake of Christ; an attitude of self-preservation that resulted in a neglect of others during conflict; claiming immunity from suffering and death on the grounds of high-status and that God would not approve; grumbling against God because of suffering inflicted by adversaries; the desire to avoid death for the sake of Christ instead of desiring resurrection as God’s approval of death for the sake of Christ. Our conclusions suggest a unifying theme for Philippians that spirals around “God’s approval.” Allowing for variations and emphases in the progression of an argument, Paul’s rhetoric seems designed to address the attitude of self-preservation evinced in those with a tendency to avoid suffering and death for the sake of Christ. Consequently, the matrix sentence which we propose as most economically accounting for the greatest number of formal and semantic features in Phil 1:27–3:21 is: God approves of suffering and death for the sake of Christ. We believe this matrix sentence is an expression of the epistolary argument, central theme or rhetorical situation and brings the passage into unity and significance. It gives an account of the spread of stylistic, linguistic, grammatical and theological elements highlighted in our exegesis of Phil 1:27—3:21, and which we offer as a yardstick for judging the plausibility of the proposed rhetorical situation. Before we investigate the possibility that the alleged literary allusions to Scripture in Phil 2:10–16 are variants of this matrix, a hypothetical construction of the historical situation in Philippi can be put forward.

### **A Hypothetical Construction of the Historical Situation of Philippians**

While in prison, Paul had learned from Epaphroditus that the Philippians were being persecuted because of their confession of Christ as the one and only Lord, and their refusal to participate in the imperial cult of Philippi. The opposition and conflict caused disagreement within the Philippian Church over the role of suffering, with some Philippians being disinclined to accept it as a legitimate consequence of gospel citizenship approved by God. The division left some within the community bearing the burden of persecution more than others. Epaphroditus also reported that those Philippians with a tendency to promote suffering-free gospel citizenship were questioning the community’s continued patronage of Paul since they perceived his imprisonment as an impediment to gospel mission and something which God would not sanction. In Paul’s view, their attitude of self-preservation induced a wrong assessment of hardship and disdain of a God who appeared indifferent to the apparent failure of his people. Paul writes to instruct and warn the Philippians that the avoidance of suffering resulting from a loyalty to Christ would require rejection of submission, obedience and self-renunciation—in fact, those things Christ did to achieve their salvation. Paul’s letter is therefore intended to exhort the Philippians to persevere, and not capitulate in the face of suffering and death, since God indeed approves of their circumstances in advancing the gospel.

## Praise for *Paul's Covert Use of Scripture*

“This stimulating book offers fresh insights into why Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians and makes a significant contribution to current debates on Paul’s use of Scripture. Highly recommended.”

—**Steve Moyise**, Visiting Professor, Newman University, Birmingham

“Enquiry into Paul’s use of Scripture is a well-plowed furrow. In this volume, McAuley makes a fresh contribution to this debate by drawing attention to a neglected passage in a neglected epistle. As a consequence, Philippians can now make a contribution, in its own right, to this very important aspect of Pauline hermeneutics.”

—**Dr. Andrew D. Clarke**, University of Aberdeen

“[A] remarkably researched book. . . . His use of the English language is outstanding—nearing C. S. Lewis in his articulation. . . . This is a first-class offering of modern scholarship with no shortcuts. McAuley digs deep into a narrow passage of Scripture and finds unity in Paul’s thought and coherence with shafts of prophetic insight found in the Old Testament.”

—**Tony Sargent**, International Chairman, Elam Ministries Asia; Former Principal, International Christian College, Glasgow; Professor of Practical Theology, Olivet University, San Francisco

