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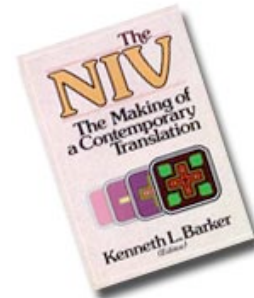
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[YHWH Sabaoth: "The Lord Almighty"](#)

[Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament](#)

[When "Literal" Is Not Accurate](#)

[Anglicizing the NIV Bible](#)

[Isn't the King James Version Good Enough? \(The KJV and the NIV Compared\)](#)

[Contributors](#)  
[In Memoriam](#) | [Notes](#)

## ABOUT THE NIV

### The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation

#### CHAPTER 10: Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament

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So much of the New Testament consists of references to or quotations from the Old Testament that the so-called New Testament Christian is biblically illiterate if he knows little or nothing about the Old Testament. Reading the New Testament without knowledge of its Old Testament background is like starting to watch a two-act play at the beginning of the second act.<sup>1</sup> The latter experience would be supremely unsatisfying—for most of us, at least. We want to know how the play began—in its entirety, not just in its second half.

The Bible is the most dramatic literary production of all time. The preparation and promise of the Old Testament find their completion and fulfillment in the New Testament. Each half of Scripture needs the other for its fullest understanding. As Augustine put it: "The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed." Such a close relationship between the two Testaments is reason enough to warrant frequent examination of the ever-fascinating and always-important topic, "Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament." Each of the major elements in that title, however, is fraught with its own dangers.

### Preliminary Questions

1. *What is meant by "New Testament"?* The so-called *Textus Receptus* ("Received Text") is the Greek form of the New Testament that underlies the KJV translation. It is now almost universally recognized that the *Textus Receptus* (TR) contains so many significant departures from the original manuscripts of the various New Testament books that it cannot be relied on as a basis for translation into other languages.<sup>2</sup>

An example of the effect that this has on quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament is the way Luke 4:18-19 cites Isaiah 61:1-2. The phrase "to bind up the brokenhearted" (Isa. 61:1) was omitted by Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:18NIV), as the best Greek manuscripts attest. The KJV of Luke 4:18, however, includes the phrase (translating "to heal the brokenhearted") because it used the inferior TR as its basic manuscript. This is not to say, of course, that the TR is always wrong and that other Greek manuscripts are always right, because each variant between texts must be judged on its own merits.<sup>3</sup> It is simply to point out that in most cases the readings found in older manuscripts, particularly the Greek uncials Vaticanus and Sinaiticus of the fourth century A.D., are to be preferred to those found in later manuscripts, such as those that reflect the TR.

By making full use of the discipline known as textual criticism, the NIV translators attempted to employ the most accurate and original Greek text for every given New Testament passage. Such a procedure results in what is called an "eclectic" text<sup>4</sup> and ensures that we are reading and studying a New Testament that is as close to the divinely inspired original as is humanly possible.

2. *What is meant by "Old Testament"?* It hardly needs to be stated that "the NT reacts to the OT as the OT was experienced in the first century."<sup>5</sup> Our present knowledge, however, leads us to believe that more than one version of the Hebrew Old Testament was available to the first-century reader who "experienced" it. In addition one or more Greek translations of the Hebrew Old Testament were circulating at that time, and Aramaic Targums ("translations," "paraphrases," "interpretations")—whether written or oral—were also current.<sup>6</sup> It is to be expected, then, that the New Testament writers would quote sometimes from one Old Testament version or translation, sometimes from another.<sup>7</sup> In every case, however, we can be sure that the inspired author quoted from or alluded to a version that did not distort the truth being asserted.

3 *What is meant by "quotations"?* Roger Nicole reminds us that the New Testament writers did not have the same rules for quoting that we take for granted today. They neither had nor used quotation marks, ellipsis marks, brackets, or footnote references.<sup>8</sup> They were therefore unable to indicate readily where quotations began and ended, whether omissions occurred in their citations, whether editorial comments were being inserted or intercalated, whether more than one Old Testament passage was being quoted, etc.

In addition "quotations" should be understood to include allusions and paraphrases, since the NT writers often quoted from memory and therefore with greater or lesser degrees of freedom.<sup>9</sup> The minds of the New Testament authors were so saturated with Old Testament texts and teachings that they referred to the Old Testament in a variety of ways—now quoting precisely, now alluding to this or that passage, now paraphrasing—but never deviating from its life-transforming message.

### The Quotations Themselves

1. *How many quotations are there?* Unanimity on the question of statistics is notably lacking. New Testament verses or passages introduced by a formula designating that what follows is indeed an Old Testament quotation number 224 according to Nicole,<sup>10</sup> 239 according to Shires.<sup>11</sup> If we add to these the Old Testament citations that are not formally introduced but are nevertheless clearly intended as quotations, the number is 255,<sup>12</sup> "at least 295"<sup>13</sup> etc. (According to my own count, in the NIV there are 296 New Testament footnote references to Old Testament citations.)

If we include allusions, the total rises dramatically, with tallies ranging from 442<sup>14</sup> to 4,105.<sup>15</sup> But since "the gradation from quotation to allusion is so imperceptible that it is almost impossible to draw any certain line,"<sup>16</sup> it is perhaps best to content ourselves with round numbers and rough estimates. S. Lewis Johnson summarizes: "There are over three hundred explicit quotations of the Old Testament in the New, and there are literally thousands of allusions."<sup>17</sup> Nicole is thus able to assert that "more than 10 per cent of the New Testament text is made up of citations or direct allusions to the Old Testament."<sup>18</sup>

2. *What New Testament books quote the Old Testament, and what Old Testament books are quoted in the New Testament?* The New Testament authors were by no means the first to quote from the Old Testament. In fact a later Old Testament author sometimes quoted from or alluded to one or more earlier Old Testament authors. Wenham points out:

We have an instance of a later prophet quoting an earlier prophet in Daniel 9:2, where Jeremiah is quoted; references to the former prophets collectively by Zechariah (1:4–6; 7:7, 12); and an instance of earlier prophets being quoted as authoritative by the elders of the land in Jeremiah 26:17 [*sic*].<sup>19</sup>

The Daniel and Zechariah references noted here are not footnoted in the NIV since it was not our normal policy to footnote general allusions. But the Jeremiah 26:18 reference, which cites Micah 3:12, is duly footnoted.

The Old Testament quotes and/or alludes to itself far more than we usually realize. The NIV footnotes call attention to the following additional citations: Genesis 50:25 in Exodus 13:19; Deuteronomy 1:36 in Joshua 14:9; 1 Kings 21:19 in 2 Kings 9:26; 1 Kings 21:23<sup>20</sup> in 2 Kings 9:36; Deuteronomy 24:16 in 2 King 14:6<sup>21</sup> 2 Kings 10:30 in 15:12; Exodus 20:4–5; in 2 Kings 17:12; 1 Kings 8:29 in 2 Kings 23:27; Deuteronomy 24:16 in 2 Chronicles 25:4; Leviticus 23:37–40 in Nehemiah 8:15; Deuteronomy 15:12 in Jeremiah 34:14; 1 Samuel 5:5 in Zephaniah 1:9. An example of an important allusion not footnoted by the NIV is Exodus 20:25 in Joshua 8:31.

It is generally agreed that the New Testament never quotes from the Apocrypha, though some have detected apocryphal allusions here and there. Jude 14 quotes the pseudepigraphal 1 Enoch (also known as Ethiopic Enoch) 1:9. Such quotations and allusions do not confer canonical status on the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, however, any more than Paul's quotation of Aratus in Acts 17:28, Menander in 1 Corinthians 15:33, or Epimenides in Titus 1:12 turns the writings of pagan poets into inspired Scripture.<sup>22</sup> NIV footnote policy does not include references to nonbiblical or extrabiblical sources.

As to which of the New Testament books quote from the Old Testament, the NIV footnotes omit from consideration Philippians through 2 Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, and 1 John through Jude. Romans occupies pride of place with 58 footnotes, while Matthew and Hebrews are second and third (47 and 39 footnotes respectively). Needless to say, all the New Testament books without exception make allusion to the Old Testament, however generally.

In this respect the Book of Revelation holds its own unique fascination. "That museum of rough Old Testament allusions"<sup>23</sup> cites or refers to the Old Testament "about 331" times, nearly a third of the total New Testament tally of "rather over 1,020 direct quotations or verbal allusions to the Old."<sup>24</sup> At the same time it is commonly asserted that, however many allusions it may have, Revelation exhibits no direct quotations at all.<sup>25</sup> The NIV footnotes rightly disagree, however, by specifying that Revelation 2:27; 19:15 quote Psalm 2:9 in whole or in part and that Revelation 1:13; 14:14 quote the phrase "like a son of man" from Daniel 7:13.<sup>26</sup>

Of Old Testament books quoted in the New Testament, it is generally agreed that Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs are not explicitly cited. To this list some would add Lamentations,<sup>27</sup> others Chronicles.<sup>28</sup> But just as all the New Testament books make at least general allusion to the Old Testament, so also the New Testament contains "passages reminiscent of all Old Testament books without exception."<sup>29</sup> And the Old Testament verse most frequently cited in the New Testament is Psalm 110:1.<sup>30</sup>

In a very few cases, no suitable Old Testament passage can be found as the source for what clearly seems to be direct citations of Scripture in the New Testament. In such instances it would seem that the New Testament writer was freely summarizing Old Testament teaching and did not intend to quote—either *verbatim ac litteratim* or *ad sensum*—a specific Old Testament verse.

3. *What Old Testament versions do the New Testament authors quote?* Most of the New Testament citations of the Old Testament are from the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation in common use in first-century Palestine.<sup>31</sup> Various forms of the Hebrew text were sometimes cited as well—especially in books such as Matthew and Hebrews, which had Hebrew-Christian audiences in view.<sup>32</sup> A third source for New Testament quotations are the various Aramaic Targums—whether written or oral—on the Old Testament. Earlier opinions held that written Targums did not make their appearance till the second century A.D. or later,<sup>33</sup> but the discovery of a number of Aramaic documents (including Targums) among the Dead Sea Scrolls has increased the likelihood of the existence of written Aramaic Targums at a much earlier date. In any case a more pervasive influence of such material on the New Testament writers has become more plausible in the light of recent research.<sup>34</sup>

At one time it was thought that first-century Christian missionaries may have compiled one or more books of notes on the Old Testament texts most useful to them in their evangelistic endeavors. Such a "testimony book" then became the source of many New Testament citations.<sup>35</sup> Although this idea at first attracted a few adherents and has even gained a certain documentary credibility by virtue of the discovery of *testimonia* fragments among the Dead Sea Scrolls, its weaknesses outweigh its strengths and have caused it to fall into disfavor. Other related theories, while somewhat promising, have not gained the same kind of widespread consensus that sees the LXX version(s), Hebrew text(s), and Aramaic Targums as the major (if not exclusive) sources of New Testament quotations from the Old Testament.<sup>36</sup>

4. *Why do New Testament writers quote from the Old Testament?* The Old Testament was the Bible of first-century believers. They quoted from it as an indispensable aid to their ministry and mission, and they made primary use of the LXX—even when it disagreed with the Hebrew<sup>37</sup>—because it was such a widely disseminated version and could be read and understood by large numbers of people.<sup>38</sup>

When New Testament writers cited the Old Testament, they were often alluding not only to the specific passage quoted but also to its context, whether near or remote.<sup>39</sup> An excellent example is Hebrews 12:21: "The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, 'I am trembling with fear.'" The NIV correctly footnotes Deuteronomy 9:19 as the closest Old Testament parallel, but the previous footnote recognizes Exodus 19 as the overall contextual setting. It was to be expected that most first-century readers and hearers, steeped in the Old Testament Scriptures, would see in their mind's eye the entire context of any Old Testament verse or two brought to their attention.

Finally New Testament writers quoted from the Old Testament because they believed that it pointed to the Messiah, whom they had come to know and love as Jesus Christ (Luke 24:25–27, 44–49; Acts 3:17–26; 2 Cor. 1:20; 3:14). They read the Old Testament in the light of what Christ had done for them and for the whole world—and so should we.<sup>40</sup>

5. *How do New Testament writers quote from the Old Testament?* Wenham maintains:

We have ... no right to demand of believers in verbal inspiration that they always quote Scripture verbatim, particularly when the Scriptures are not written in the native language of either writer or reader. As with the word preached, we have a right to expect that quotations should be sufficiently accurate not to misrepresent the passage quoted; but, unless the speaker makes it clear that his quotation is meant to be verbatim, we have no right to demand that it should be so. In the nature of the case, the modern scholarly practice of meticulously accurate citation, with the verification of all references, was out of the question.<sup>41</sup>

Given these parameters it is possible, with R. T. France,<sup>42</sup> to distinguish the following five forms of Old Testament text quoted or alluded to in the New Testament: (1) those that agree with both LXX and Hebrew, constituting more than half the total number;<sup>43</sup> (2) those that agree with one LXX text against another; (3) those that agree with the LXX against the Hebrew; (4) those that agree with the Hebrew against the LXX; (5) those that differ from both the LXX and the Hebrew. The latter would include citations from one or more Aramaic Targums (oral or written), free renderings<sup>44</sup> of the substance of a passage, etc.

Various combinations of passages cited from two or more Old Testament books are not uncommon in the New Testament. A fine example is Romans 3:10–18, which, according to the NIV footnotes there, quotes from the Psalms, Isaiah, and (perhaps) Ecclesiastes. A noteworthy variation of this phenomenon is the so-called *h-a98araz* ("chain," "necklace"; the same Hebrew root is used in Song of Songs 1:10, where it is translated "strings of jewels"), which intersperses a series of quotations with conjunctions, introductory formulas, and the like (see, e.g., Rom. 9:25–29<sup>45</sup> and NIV footnotes there).

When a New Testament writer quoted an Old Testament prophecy or promise, he was not necessarily saying that the Old Testament text in question was a direct prophetic prediction being fulfilled in his own time.<sup>46</sup> In a substantial number of cases the relationship of the Old Testament text to its New Testament citation is that of type to antitype, and the Old Testament passage is an example of what I have elsewhere called "typological prefiguration."<sup>47</sup> The New Testament writers' approach to the Old Testament was not as one-dimensional as it is often made out to be. "The Early Church looked upon the OT as a Prophecy, as a history (the book of preparation), as a promise, and as the book of prefigurations."<sup>48</sup>

Typology is almost universally recognized as a legitimate hermeneutical method that can be used to clarify the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament.<sup>49</sup> "Typology connotes two factors: a set of correspondences between objects or actions in both Testaments, and an indication that their interrelations are God-willed."<sup>50</sup> As long as the first is controlled by the second—and we can be reasonably sure of that only as we rely on the insights expressed in the words of the apostolic authors of the New Testament—only then can we prevent typological method from vaporizing into flights of fancy.

## Conclusion

Jean Levee gave to his book on biblical criticism and exegesis the perceptive title *The Bible: Word of God in Words of Men*.<sup>51</sup> The subtle symbiosis between divine and human authorship in Scripture is present in such a way as to give us divine truth without admixture of human error. This fact is none the less true with respect to Old Testament quotations in the New Testament than with respect to any other biblical phenomenon.<sup>52</sup>

At the same time, "when the Holy Ghost in the New Testament quotes something He said in the Old, He is

completely independent of all human versions. He is His own infallible interpreter.”<sup>53</sup> Since “all Scripture is God-breathed,” Old Testament quotations in the New Testament are—like the rest of the Bible—“useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). The NIV thus performs a useful service for its readers by setting off in quotation marks almost three hundred citations of the Old Testament in the New Testament and by footnoting each Old Testament reference at the appropriate New Testament location.



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