

Hi, Color Scheme Not a member? Click here Sign in

[Like](#)

ver. 2.0.16.02.29

|                   |                         |                     |                    |                    |              |           |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------|
| BIBLE STUDY TOOLS | ORIGINAL LANGUAGE TOOLS | HISTORICAL WRITINGS | PASTORAL RESOURCES | PERSONAL RESOURCES | STUDY GROUPS | SITE INFO |
|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------|

Finding the new version too difficult to understand? Go to <http://classic.studylight.org/>

**Join with me as I raise money to build classrooms in Uganda! Click here to find out how!**  
**Maybe you would like to sponsor a child through Compassion International! For every child sponsored by StudyLight.org visitors, I will donate \$105 to build classrooms for the children in Uganda! Click to sponsor a child today!**

Home / Bible Dictionaries / Holman Bible Dictionary

## Holman Bible Dictionary

### Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament

The influence of the Old Testament is seen throughout the New Testament. The New Testament writers included approximately 250 express Old Testament quotations, and if one includes indirect or partial quotations, the number jumps to more than 1,000. It is clear that the writers of the New Testament were concerned with demonstrating the continuity between the Old Testament Scriptures and the faith they proclaimed. They were convinced that in Jesus the Old Testament promises had been fulfilled.

#### Resource Toolbox

- [Print Article](#)
- [Send Link to a Friend](#)

#### Types of Quotations

1. Formula quotations are introduced by a typical introductory quotations formula which generally employ verbs of "saying" or "writing." The most common introductory formulas are: "as the Scripture hath said" (John 7:38 ); "What saith the Scripture" (Galatians 4:30 ); "it is (stands) written," emphasizing the permanent validity of the Old Testament revelation (Mark 1:2; Romans 1:17; Romans 3:10 ); "that it might be fulfilled," emphasizing the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies (Matthew 4:14 , Matthew 12:17 , Matthew 21:4 ); "God hath said," "He saith," "the Holy Spirit says," which personify Scripture and reflect its divine dimension (Romans 9:25; Romans 10:21; 2 Corinthians 6:16 ); "Moses," "David," or "Isaiah" says which emphasize the human element in Scripture (Romans 10:16 , Romans 10:19-20; Hebrews 4:7 ).

2. Composite quotations combine two or more Old Testament texts drawn from one or more of the sections of the Hebrew Old Testament canon (The Law, Prophets, and Writings). For example, Romans 11:8-10 quotes from the Law ( Deuteronomy 29:4 ), the Prophets (Isaiah 29:10 ) and the writings (Psalm 69:22-23 ). In some cases, a series of Old Testament texts may be used in a commentary-like fashion as in John 12:38-40 and Romans 9-11 . Composite quotes are often organized around thematic emphases or catchwords in keeping with a practice common to Judaism and based on the notion set forth in Deuteronomy 19:15 that two or three witnesses establish the matter. The "stumbling stone" motif reflected in Romans 9:33 ( Isaiah 8:14; Isaiah 28:16 ) and 1 Peter 2:6-9 ( Isaiah 8:14; Isaiah 28:16; Psalm 118:22 ) is a good example of this method.

3. Unacknowledged quotations are often woven into the fabric of the New Testament text without acknowledgment or introduction. For example, Paul quoted Genesis 15:6 in his discussion of Abraham ( Galatians 3:6 ) and Genesis 12:3 ( Galatians 3:8 ) with no acknowledgment or introductory formula.

4. Indirect quotations or allusions form the most difficult type of Old Testament quotation to identify. The gradation from quotation to allusion may be almost imperceptible. An allusion may be little more than a clause, phrase, or even a word drawn from an Old Testament text which might easily escape the notice of the reader. For example, the reader might easily miss the fact that the words spoken from the cloud at the transfiguration of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 17:5 combine three separate Old Testament texts: "Thou art my Son" ( Psalm 2:7 ), "in whom my soul delighteth" (Isaiah 42:1 ), and "unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy 18:15 ).

Sources of Old Testament Quotations Since the New Testament was written in Greek for predominantly Greek readers, it is not surprising that a large majority of Old Testament quotes in the New Testament are drawn from the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint (LXX). Of Paul's 93 quotes, 51 are in absolute or virtual agreement with the LXX, while only 4 agree with the Hebrew text. This means that 38 diverge from all known Greek or Hebrew Old Testament texts. Of Matthew's 43 quotes, 11 agree with the LXX, while the other 32 differ from all known sources. How then are these quotes to be explained? The New Testament writers may have used a version of the Old Testament which is unknown to us, or they may have been quoting from memory. It is also possible that the New Testament writers were more concerned with meaning and interpretation. It has also been suggested that the Old Testament quotations may have been drawn from "testimony books," collections of selected, combined, and interpreted Old Testament texts gathered by the early Christian community for proclamation and apologetics. The frequent use of certain Old Testament texts, such as Psalm 110:1 , Isaiah 43:1 , and so forth, in the preaching and writing of the early church and the discovery of such collections at Qumran seem to support such a possibility.

The Uses of Old Testament Quotations The New Testament writers used Old Testament quotations for at least four reasons: (1) to demonstrate that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's purposes and of the prophetic witness of the Old Testament Scriptures ( Romans 1:2; Matthew 4:14; Matthew 12:17-21; Matthew 21:4-5 ); (2) as a source for ethical instruction and edification of the church ( Romans 13:8-10; 2 Corinthians 13:1 ); (3) to interpret contemporary events (Romans 9-11; Romans 15:8-12 ); (4) to prove a point on the assumption that the Scripture is God's Word (1 Corinthians 10:26; 1 Corinthians 14:21; 1 Corinthians 15:55 ). The approaches employed in the use of the Old Testament are reflective of first century Judaism as represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo of Alexandria, and later rabbinic Judaism. Some Old Testament quotations are used in their literal historical sense and, therefore, have the same meaning in the New Testament as they had in the Old Testament. The quotation of Psalm 78:24 in John 6:31 is a good example of such usage. Some quotations reflect a typical approach to interpreting the Old

#### Visit Our Sponsors

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Bible software for Believing Study: SwordSearcher</p> <p>Looking for that lost cantata? Let US find it!</p> | <p>Help change the hearts of people one book at a time! Click to find out how!</p> <p>Biblical Hebrew study &amp; learning software: BMSoftware.com</p> |
|--|---|

#### Search for...

Enter query in the box below

Search!

or

Choose a letter to browse:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M  
N O P Q R S T U V W Y Z

**Prev Entry**  
Old Testament

**Next Entry**  
Olives

ADVERTISEMENT

Testament in first-century Judaism known as *midrash* . *Midrash* is an exposition of a text which aims at bringing out its contemporary relevance. The Old Testament text is quoted and explained so as to make it apply to or be meaningful for the current situation. The use of Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4:3-25 and the use of Psalm 78:24 in John 6:31-58 reflect such an approach.

Some Old Testament texts are interpreted *typologically* . In this approach, the New Testament writer sees a correspondence between persons, events, or things in the Old Testament and persons, events, or things in their contemporary setting. The correspondence with the past is not found in the written text, but within the historical event. Underlying typology is the conviction that certain events in the past history of Israel as recorded in earlier Scriptures revealed God's ways and purposes with persons in a typical way. Matthew's use of Hosea 11:1 ( Hosea 2:15 ) suggests that the Gospel writer saw a correspondence between Jesus' journey into Egypt and the Egyptian sojourn of the people of Israel. Jesus recapitulated or reexperienced the sacred history of Israel. The redemptive purposes of God demonstrated in the Exodus (reflected by the prophet Hosea) were being demonstrated in Jesus' life. In some cases, the understanding and application of the Old Testament quotation is dependent on an awareness of the quotation's wider context in the Old Testament. The use of the quotation is intended to call the reader's attention to the wider Old Testament context or theme and might be referred to as a "*pointer quotation* ." In first-century Judaism where large portions of Scripture were known by heart, it was customary to quote only the beginning of a passage even if its continuation was to be kept in mind. A good example of this use may be seen in Romans 1-3 . Paul had discussed both the faithfulness of God and the sinfulness of humanity. In Romans 3:4 Paul quoted Psalm 51:4 to support his first point. He continued his argument with a further reference to human wickedness which is, in fact, the subject of Psalm 51:5; but he did not feel the need to quote the verse, since it was already suggested to those familiar with the biblical text. Finally, there is a limited *allegorical* use of the Old Testament text in which the text is seen as a kind of code having two meanings—the literal, superficial level of meaning, and a deeper, underlying meaning such as in Galatians 4:22-31 .

Despite similarities with contemporary Jewish use(s) of the Old Testament, the New Testament writers interpreted the Old Testament in a radically new way. New Testament writers did not deliberately use a different exegetical method. They wrote from a different theological perspective. The writers of the New Testament were convinced that the true meaning of the Old Testament is Jesus Christ and that He alone provides the means of understanding it. True interpretation of the Old Testament is achieved by reading Old Testament passages or incidents in light of the event of Christ. While many of the Old Testament texts quoted in the New Testament had already been accepted as messianic (for example, Psalm 110:1 ) or could in light of Jesus' actual life claim to be messianic (Psalm 22:1; Isaiah 53:1 ), for the early Christians, all Scripture was to be interpreted by the fact of Christ because it is to Him that the Old Testament Scripture points (John 5:39 ). In summary, the New Testament writer quoted or alluded to the Old Testament in order to demonstrate how God's purposes have been fulfilled and are being fulfilled in Jesus.

Hulitt Gloer

#### Copyright Statement

These dictionary topics are from the Holman Bible Dictionary, published by Broadman & Holman, 1991. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Broadman & Holman.

#### Bibliography Information

Butler, Trent C. Editor. Entry for 'Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament'. Holman Bible Dictionary. <http://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/hbd/view.cgi?n=4699>. 1991.