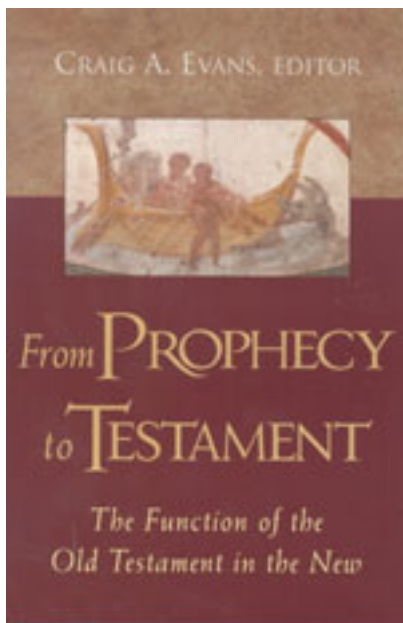


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Evans, Craig A., ed.

From Prophecy to Testament: The Function of the Old Testament in the New

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All the essays contained in this collection concern, in one way or another, varieties of usage of the Old Testament in the New Testament. I summarize the contributions (with an occasional critical remark) and end with some comments on the collection as a whole.

The collection is opened with an introduction by the editor (1–22). He points out that the New Testament is fundamentally indebted to the Old Testament and draws attention to some topics that are essential to understanding the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament era (the open canon and the variety of versions of Scripture, of interpretive approaches, and of relevant early Jewish and early Christian literature). His bibliographies will be useful to the student beginner.

Bruce Chilton (“From Aramaic Paraphrase to Greek Testament” [23–43]) discusses similarities between the Targumim and the New Testament, from shared wording in the context of exegesis of the same Old Testament text (as in the case of the explanation of Isa 6:9–10 in Mark 4:11–12) to a shared thematic emphasis. “[T]he Targumim represent traditions from the earliest period of formative Judaism in texts that are relatively late in their literary forms” (40), and therefore they should be taken into account in the study of the New Testament.

In a long article (“The Aramaic Psalter and the New Testament: Praising the Lord in History and Prophecy” [44–91]), Craig A. Evans gives an overview of research in the Aramaic Psalter, discusses its characteristic terms, clusters, or phrases, and suggests that *Targum Psalms* contains material dating back to the first century C.E. or even earlier. He finally indicates some points where, to his mind, the Aramaic Psalter could shed light on New Testament passages, such as the word “beloved” in Mark 1:11, in an allusion to Ps 2:7, where the Aramaic version renders: “Beloved as a son to a father you are to me.” (Evans here overlooks the fact that “pleased” occurs already in Isa 42:1 in the Hebrew Bible, and not only in the Aramaic version.)

According to Rikk E. Watts (“Immanuel: Virgin Birth Proof Text or Programmatic Warning of Things to Come (Isa 7:14 in Matt 1:23)?” [92–113]), “(a) Matthew’s citation of Isa 7:14 not so much serves as a proof text supporting Jesus’ miraculous birth as constitutes a warning of the dire consequences should Israel respond faithlessly to the salvation he inaugurates and (b) the twofold naming—Jesus (salvation) and Immanuel (potential disaster if Yahweh’s intervention is met with unbelief)—is programmatic for the gospel’s larger literary and theological schema” (93). Watts argues that the original Isaianic context of Isa 7:14 should be taken into account in explaining the quotation in Matt 1:23; he pays less attention to the Matthean context of the quotation.

Robert F. Shedinger (“The Gospels and the Text of the Hebrew Bible: Micah 5:1 (Matt 2:6) in Tatian’s Diatessaron” [114–25]) argues that in its Syriac version of Matt 2:6, the Diatessaron read “king” instead of “ruler” and that this means that Matthew’s text originally read βασιλεύς, not ἡγούμενος. Matthew would then support J. A. Fitzmyer’s conjectural emendation of the Hebrew text of Mic 5:1, so that we would have here an instance of the New Testament being a source of evidence for the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. Shedinger’s argument actually consists of three hypotheses linked together, and at least two of the three are very weak.

Dialoguing with J. D. G. Dunn and N. T. Wright, Simon J. Gathercole (“Torah, Life, and Salvation: Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and the New Testament” [126–45]) shows that in early Judaism Lev 18:5 was generally supposed to speak of Torah observance as not just regulating life but leading to life and that this life was assumed to be eternal life and not just the lengthening of earthly life. The same interpretation of this Old Testament verse is supposed in the Gospels (Luke 10:25–37) and especially by Paul in Rom 10:5 and Gal 3:12, where he contrasts righteousness by faith with righteousness by obedience to the Torah.

Michael Labahn (“The Significance of Signs in Luke 7:22–23 in the Light of Isaiah 61 and the Messianic Apocalypse” [146–68]) studies Jesus’ answer to the question of John

the Baptist whether Jesus is “the coming one” in Q 7:22–23. We meet here a combination of realized and future eschatology: God’s salvation is present in what Jesus, and the Q community in his wake, are saying and doing; whoever accepts their proclamation of the kingdom will take part in the final realization of salvation at the Parousia of the Son of Man, but whoever refuses it will then undergo final rejection. Labahn compares the Q passage with its redaction by Matthew and Luke, with the message of Jesus himself, and with the *Messianic Apocalypse* from Qumran (4Q521).

In a challenging contribution (“‘No One Has Ever Seen God’: Revisionary Criticism in the Fourth Gospel” [169–84]), A. J. Droge maintains that, on the basis of its view that Jesus is the only revealer of God, the Fourth Gospel deals in a completely free way with the Jewish Scriptures: some passages are retained; others are abrogated; others again are restored or revised. Droge solves the Johannine dialectic of old and new revelation, of restraint and freedom, in a somewhat simplistic way by recognizing only one of the two poles. It seems to me that John is more complex.

James C. VanderKam (“The Festival of Weeks and the Story of Pentecost in Acts 2” [185–205]) begins with a discussion of the Festival of Weeks in the Hebrew Bible and in later Jewish tradition; he emphasizes its significance as the festival of the covenant in the *Book of Jubilees* and in the Qumran literature. Next he gives a realistic assessment of the possible influence of the Jewish Festival of Weeks on Luke’s Pentecost story at the beginning of Acts. This influence is to be found in common themes such as ascension to heaven, fiery voices or tongues symbolizing the words of God or of the apostles, and ideal fellowship.

James L. Kugel (“Stephen’s Speech (Acts 7) in Its Exegetical Context” [206–18]) shows that many apparent deviations from the biblical text in Stephen’s review of biblical history in Acts 7 (such as that Moses was “beautiful *before God*” according to Acts 7:20; cf. Exod 2:2) actually go back to ancient Jewish exegesis. He very rightly draws our attention to the circumstance that the Old Testament that is used in the New Testament is the Old Testament as read and interpreted in Judaism around the beginning of the era.

Brigitte Kahl (“Hagar between Genesis and Galatians: The Stony Road to Freedom” [219–32]) offers a rather intricate exegesis of Gal 4:21–31. In her view, Paul’s allegorical Hagar stands for “the whole hierarchical division of humanity into superior and inferior, excluded and included, which shapes the present world order (*kosmos*)” (229). Paul’s allegorical Sarah stands for “a nonviolent subversion of the Roman law and a messianic-apocalyptic reinterpretation of the Jewish law by having Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised, eat together at one table and serve each other in one universal community” (231).

Gary A. Anderson ("The Culpability of Eve: From Genesis to Timothy" [233–51]) takes as his starting point the explanation of Gen 2–3 in 1 Tim 2:14, according to which Eve was deceived but Adam was not. He compares various ancient approaches to the question of the culpability of Adam and Eve, especially those in *The Life of Adam and Eve*, and concludes that the author of 1 Timothy must have known a tradition, also found in the *Life*, that Eve first ate the fruit separately from Adam and then gave it to Adam, who was unaware of what he did.

James A. Sanders ("From Prophecy to Testament: An Epilogue" [252–58]) offers some final reflections on the essays of the collection. He considers the continuous reinterpretation of Scripture to constitute a "multiform canonical process" (257), the thrust of which should be the recognition that God is One. The book closes with indices of modern authors and of ancient sources.

The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament is much studied nowadays, and rightly so, as we can understand the earliest Christian literature only if we realize that it is fundamentally indebted to the Old Testament. This collection of essays is a welcome contribution to the study of the topic. It serves to make one aware that the Targumic literature, if critically handled, can be a useful source of information on Jewish interpretation of Scripture in the first century C.E. and that the Old Testament of the first Christians was the Old Testament as interpreted in contemporary Judaism. It also makes one aware that the book's subtitle is, all things considered, not quite correct: one cannot speak of *the* function of the Old Testament in the New Testament but only of a variety of functions.