INTERTEXTUALITY

The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament

What is "Intertextuality" in New Testament Studies?

- Intertextuality is the term most often used to describe the varied ways NT authors engage the Old Testament

- It can also refer to the study of these connections; and intertextuality as a sub-discipline of New Testament studies has burgeoned in the past four decades.

Types of Uses of the Old Testament

- <u>Citation</u>: An OT reference involving significant verbal repetition, often involving one or more verses of an OT text

- <u>Allusion</u>: An OT reference of a few words (e.g., 2-4 words), often with a thematic connection included that helps with recognition

- <u>Echo</u>: An implicit evocation of an OT text, with some verbal and/or conceptual connections in view (recognized as they accumulate)

An Example of a Citation: Psalm 34 in 1 Peter 2

Ps 33:13-17 (LXX; Eng: 34:12-16)

[13] Who is the person who desires to love life
and to see good days?
[14] Stop your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit.
[15] Turn away from evil and do good;
seek peace, and pursue it.
[16] The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
[17a] But the face of the Lord is set against
those who do evil.

1 Pet 3:10-12

[10] For whoever desires to loves life
and to see good days
must stop their tongue from evil
and their lips from speaking deceit;
[11] That one must turn from evil and do good,
they must seek peace and pursue it.
[12] For the eyes of the Lord are on the
righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
But the face of the Lord is set against those
who do evil.

Criteria for Determining an Intertextual Allusion or Echo

1. The availability of the precursor text to both author and audience

2. Verbal repetition between the text and its NT usage

3. Repeated use of the OT text by the same NT author in other locations

4. Thematic coherence with the NT author's own emphases

Drawn from:
Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 29-32
Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star*, 101-102.

Key Questions to Intertextual Study

1. *What is the text form that is being cited? Is it closer to the Hebrew or to the Septuagint?*

2. *Does the OT context contribute to our understanding of the NT author's usage?*

3. *How is the OT text is being employed in the NT text...For what purposes?*

Septuagint (LXX): Origins

- Translation of OT into Greek dating to the 3rd century B.C.E. (285-247 B.C.E.) in Alexandria, Egypt, when Greek had become the common language of the Diaspora Jews who were growing increasingly unfamiliar with Hebrew.

- Contains all OT books in Hebrew Bible (though different book order) plus the Apocrypha (1-4 Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, Sirach, Wisdom, Baruch, etc.)

- In the Christian Bible, the OT follows the order of the Septuagint.

- The LXX quickly became the Bible used by and for Diaspora Jews and so for the early Church.

- The LXX has a transmission history just like the Greek NT, so that the version NT writers would have used is not entirely assured

Old Testament in 1 Peter: Quotations and Allusions

1 Peter contains close to 30 quotations or allusions of varying lengths, from longer citations (e.g., 3:8-12) to relatively short allusions (e.g., 3:14—six words from Isaiah; the two 'exile/sojourner' words in 2:11 and so at 1:1, 17).

Old Testament in 1 Peter: Images

- 'Stone' texts – Isa 28: 16; 8:14; Ps 118:22 (1 Peter 2:7-8) (some found elsewhere in the NT; e.g., Acts 4:11; Rom 9:33)

- Exodus images and terms used to describe the renewed people of God (Exod 19:5-6; Isa 43:20-21): Kingdom of priests, chosen nation, a people for God's possession

- Shepherd/sheep imagery (1:19, 2:25; 5:2-4)

- Sacrificial system (cult/temple) imagery (1:19; 2:4-5)

- Household imagery (2:5; household code of 2:13-

Old Testament in 1 Peter: Personages

- Sarah as a moral example for Christian wives (3:5)

- Implicit reference(s) to Abraham (in 2:11 terms for sojourner; so also 1:1, 17)

- Typological (patterned use) of Noah and family (3:20-21)