

# OLD TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

## A TEXTUAL STUDY

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### Introduction

The New Testament writers made approximately 300 Old Testament quotations.<sup>1</sup> This use of the Old Testament has long been an area of scholarly investigation, having implications for biblical inspiration, translation, and interpretation. A major compilation of these quotations demonstrates the general fidelity of New Testament writers when quoting the Old Testament Scriptures. Less than 4% of these instances significantly deviate from both the Hebrew and LXX (Septuagint) and about 77% substantially agree with the Hebrew.<sup>2</sup> Coupled with direct and indirect New Testament affirmations of the inspiration of the Old Testament, it is obvious that both Jesus and the New Testament authors held a high view of verbal inspiration.<sup>3</sup> In light of these facts, it seems that in determining the relative value of New Testament Greek manuscripts, textual families, and printed texts, one should consider their treatment of Old Testament quotations.

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<sup>1</sup>This is excluding mere allusions and similar phraseology. Gleason Archer and Gregory Chirichigno, Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: A Complete Survey (Chicago: Moody, 1983) treat 312. The UBS2, 3, 4 (combined) list about 415, but many are only allusions.

<sup>2</sup>Archer and Chirichigno, Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: A Complete Survey, pp. xxv-xxxii. In this paper, Hebrew equates with the Masoretic Text.

<sup>3</sup>Direct attestations include 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21. Indirect ones include Matthew 22:31-32, Galatians 3:16, and 2 Peter 3:16.

For three centuries, the accepted Greek New Testament was the TR which basically agreed<sup>4</sup> with the majority of available manuscripts. In 1881 Westcott and Hort published a Greek text which relied heavily on a few ancient uncials. The Westcott-Hort text contained numerous departures from the TR and became the choice of most New Testament textual scholars, largely due to the persuasive powers of its major advocate, F.J.A. Hort. Few, if any, scholars now exclusively prefer the TR or the WH in their original or current forms.

Although the Westcott-Hort theories have long been discarded, a text similar to theirs (in a revised eclectic form) survives in the Nestle-Aland 27 and United Bible Societies 4 Greek New Testaments (hereafter referred to as the Critical text or Cr)<sup>5</sup> and is still the preferred text of most New Testament scholars. Recently, however, there has been a renewed interest in the majority text-form, as evidenced by (and partly because of) the publication of Thomas Nelson's The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text by Hodges and Farstad (hereafter referred to as the Majority Text), Wilbur Pickering's The Identity of the New Testament Text, and other related works.<sup>6</sup> Both of these works have seen two editions and both are in need of a third.

An examination of the Cr and Majority Text reveals nineteen clearly discernable instances in which they both list a New Testament variant within an Old Testament quotation. These nineteen variants provide the material for evaluating the differences in the treatment of the Old Testament by both the Cr and Majority Text. One source of information for this study is an unpublished Master of Divinity thesis by Jim Love (Baptist Bible Graduate School of Theology, 1989). In his thesis, Love analyzed the nineteen variants listed in the summary chart found below. The (Masoretic) Hebrew text, the LXX, the Cr, and the Majority

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<sup>4</sup>There are about 1,850 differences between the TR and the Majority Text.

<sup>5</sup>In this paper, Cr refers to any text like the UBS4. Technically, of course, any text compiled by making scholarly textual decisions is a critical edition.

<sup>6</sup>For additional information, contact the Majority Text Society, P.O. Box 141289, Dallas, TX

Text, with a literal English translation for each, are discussed in Love's paper. His analysis and conclusions were useful.<sup>7</sup>

### Explanation of Charts and Figures

Four categories were used to characterize how the New Testament writers handled Old Testament quotations. Only the nineteen test passages are considered. The four categories are:

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|----------|--|
| Hebrew   | Those quotations in which the LXX differs somewhat from the Hebrew and the New Testament text substantially agrees with the Hebrew rather than the LXX.  |
| Heb/LXX  | Those quotations in which the LXX and the Hebrew are in substantial agreement (within acceptable limits of a faithful translation) and the New Testament text incorporates this form.  |
| LXX      | Those quotations in which the LXX differs from the Hebrew and the New Testament text essentially follows the LXX reading.  |
| Deviates | Those quotations in which the New Testament text differs from both the LXX and the Hebrew.<br><br>In addition to Archer and Chirichigno's E category, this includes omission of a part of a quote when one of the text forms provides a more complete quote. |

The two-page summary chart (**New Testament Textual Family Variants of Old Testament Quotations**) lists the New Testament textual characteristic (the four categories above) of each of the nineteen passages for both text forms. A column with brief comments summarizing the peculiarities and significance of the variant is also provided.

The pie chart (**Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament**) shows the overall pattern of the entire New Testament use of the Old Testament, with each characteristic shown as a percentage of the total. This is based on an independent compilation of Archer and Chirichigno's work, and basically follows their categories. This chart provides a point of reference for comparing and evaluating the variants in the

75214-1289 USA. In this paper, "Majority Text" also represents the Byzantine text.

<sup>7</sup>Another of my students, David Damiano, wrote a short paper in 1990 that improved some of Love's analysis. The author freely uses these, especially the idea of the charts. Both students were a delight to work with.

two texts. The "deviates" category in this chart essentially follows Archer and Chirichigno's category E.

The second chart (**19 New Testament Variants When Quoting the Old Testament**) shows the New Testament characteristics of the Old Testament variants by percentage for both the Cr and the Majority Text. This information is on a double pie graph.

The third chart (also called **19 New Testament Variants When Quoting the Old Testament**) is done in a bar graph that gives a comparative breakdown of the kind and actual number of the 19 New Testament variants. Each category is given for both the Cr and Majority Texts.

The fourth chart (**Old Testament Variants in New Testament Quotations**) shows the distribution of the Old Testament variants for each New Testament characteristic category. It shows the number of variants each text exhibits and the number of variants in which both texts exhibit the same characteristic.

#### Analysis and Conclusions

Both the Alexandrian and Byzantine text forms exhibit a higher percentage of quotations categorized as deviations than exhibited in the New Testament as a whole. This is due in part to the application of more critical standards (in the 19 verses) than was applied by Archer and Chirichigno. One striking feature of the data is that the Cr deviates from the Old Testament nearly three times as often as the Majority Text! Indeed, in these variants, the Critical text is *characterized* by its deviant nature, deviating from the Hebrew more than 73% of the time. The Majority Text exhibits much better conformity to the overall pattern of the New Testament, and is characterized by its basic faithfulness to the Hebrew Old Testament. More than 50% of these variants correspond very closely with the Masoretic text, and about 75% agree closely with either the Hebrew or the LXX.

Also significant is the nature of the deviations present in the two rival texts. In six of the ten deviations where the Cr stands alone, it is due to an omission of part of the quote. At least three of these are theologically significant (Luke 4:4, Romans 9:28, Romans 10:15). Luke 4:4 is particularly revealing, since

the Cr omits Christ's statement on the vital importance of the Word of God to man. The omission in Mark 10:6-7, while not of major doctrinal importance, is necessary for the sense of the passage. In contrast, the sole instance where the Majority Text deviates alone (Jn. 13:18) is comparatively minor and even makes better sense in the context (Christ, speaking of his betrayal by Judas Iscariot, quotes Psalm 41:9, but changes "He who has eaten *my bread* to "He who has eaten bread *with me*," lest any might infer that Judas was a partaker of the "Bread of life"). Could this be an intentional scribal improvement? Where both the Cr and Majority Text exhibit the same deviation, the deviation is likely original, and must be examined in its own context to determine the rationale.

In evaluating the relative merits of the Cr and Majority Text from the evidence of their treatment of the Old Testament, it is clear that the Majority Text is demonstrably superior both in its faithfulness to the Old Testament and in its conformity to the established pattern of the New Testament. The Cr seems to show significantly more evidence of doctrinal and textual corruption. The principal manuscripts which underlie the Cr, א (Aleph) and B, lead in the deviation. Of the ten independent deviations in the Cr, B has nine of the passages and deviates in all nine; Aleph does so eight times. In every deviation, either Aleph, B, or both deviate from the Old Testament. If Aleph and B are superior manuscripts, it is certainly not because of their careful handling of the Old Testament!

It is by no means the only test of quality, but this deviant characteristic of the Cr casts at least some doubts on its purity and value. Christians in general and scholars in particular should consider this evidence when choosing a Greek text for study, teaching, and translation, and in their choice of translations based on these Greek texts.

One additional item should be noted. The manuscripts of the Majority Text (mostly Byzantine) do not seem to have deviated from their exemplars in order to "correct" the text in accordance with the Hebrew Old Testament. Not only is there little textual evidence for any supposed correction, but the Majority Text reading is sometimes supported by additional early readings. Also, in the one passage (John

13:18) where the Majority Text deviates alone (i.e. not with Cr.) it is joined by p66,  $\aleph$ , and A.

**NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL FAMILY VARIANTS  
OF OLD TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS**

<b>NT/OT PASSAGE</b>	<b>BYZANTINE =MAJORIT Y</b>	<b>ALEXANDRIA N (UBS4/NA27)</b>	<b>NOTES AND COMMENTS</b>
Mt. 2:18 Jer. 31:15	LXX	Hebrew	The Maj. mss. and C add "lamentation" to follow the LXX.
Mk. 10:6-7 Gen. 2:24	LXX/Heb	Deviates	UBS4 {C} text is in brackets, and omitted in $\aleph$ and B, but clearly attested in LXX, Heb, A, C, Maj. Metzger, p. 104 "it seems to be necessary."
Mk. 12:36 Ps. 110:1	LXX/Heb	Deviates	See Mt. 22:44 - same Cr. deviant; Maj., $\aleph$ , A follow Heb. w/ "footstool."
Mk. 15:34 Ps. 22:1	Hebrew	Hebrew	Minor variant; both Alex. and Byz. evidence divided. B omits "God," but Cr. does not
Lk. 4:4 Dt. 8:13	LXX/Heb	Deviates	Cr. ( $\aleph$ and B) here omits key phrase "but upon every word of God" from OT, the Maj., and A.
Lk. 19:38 Ps. 118:26	Deviates	Deviates	Both texts add the word "king" not found in OT. Actual variant is minor.
Jn. 12:40 Is. 6:10	Hebrew	Hebrew	Minor variants in verb forms; little affect on meaning.
Jn. 13:18 Ps. 41:9	Deviates	LXX/Heb	Maj., p66, $\aleph$ , A have "bread with me" where OT, 1/2 Cr. [UBS4 {C}] have "my bread."
Acts 7:32 Ex. 3:4-10	LXX/Heb	Deviates	Cr. shortens quote by omitting phrase "the God of" twice.
Rom. 3:12 Ps. 14:1-3 Ps. 53:1-3	LXX/Heb	Deviates	UBS4 {C} text is in brackets (following B) but clearly attested reading. Slight deviation from OT.
Rom. 9:28 Is. 10:22-3 Hos. 1:10	LXX	Deviates	Cr. omits LXX phrase "cut it short in righteousness."
Rom. 10:15 Is. 52:7 Na. 1:15	LXX/Heb	Deviates	Cr. (and part of the Maj.) omits OT phrase.
1 Cor.15:55	Deviates	Deviates	Both texts differ from OT in verb choice;

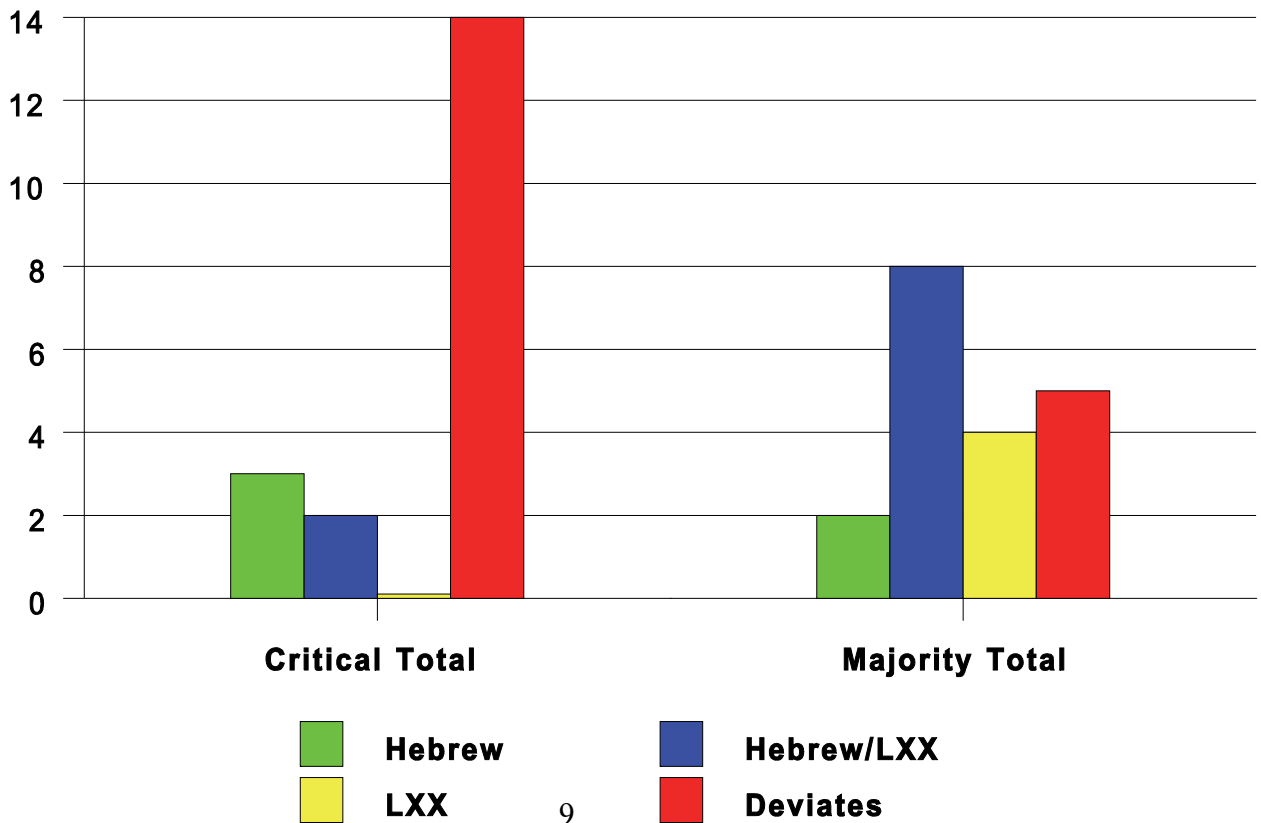
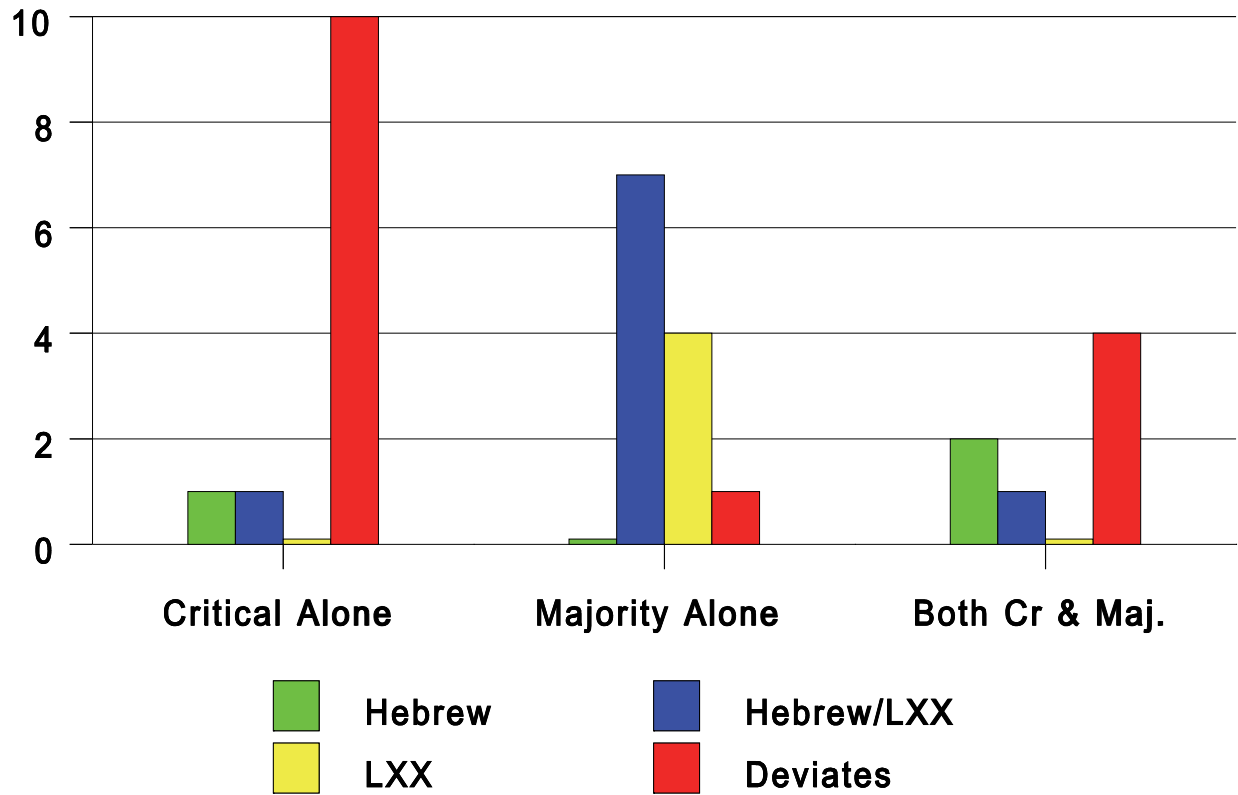
Hos. 13:14			Cr. "death" for "Hades."
Eph. 4:8 Ps. 68:18	Deviates	Deviates	Variant is minor. Both texts show intentional deviation by Paul.
Heb. 1:8 Ps. 45:6-7	LXX/Heb	LXX/Heb	Minor variant
Heb. 1:12 Ps.102:25-6	LXX	Deviates	Cr. has "as a garment," not found in OT. <sup>8</sup>
Heb. 2:7 Ps. 8:5-7	Deviates	Deviates	Both texts are divided and follow partial quote; part of Maj. and $\aleph$ , A, C, and TR have "you have put him over the works of your hands."
Heb. 8:11 Jer.31:31-4	LXX/Heb	Deviates	Cr. (h. C) omits "of them" found in OT & Maj.
Heb. 10:38 Hab. 2:3-4	LXX	Deviates	Cr. adds "my" not found in OT or Maj.; otherwise, LXX

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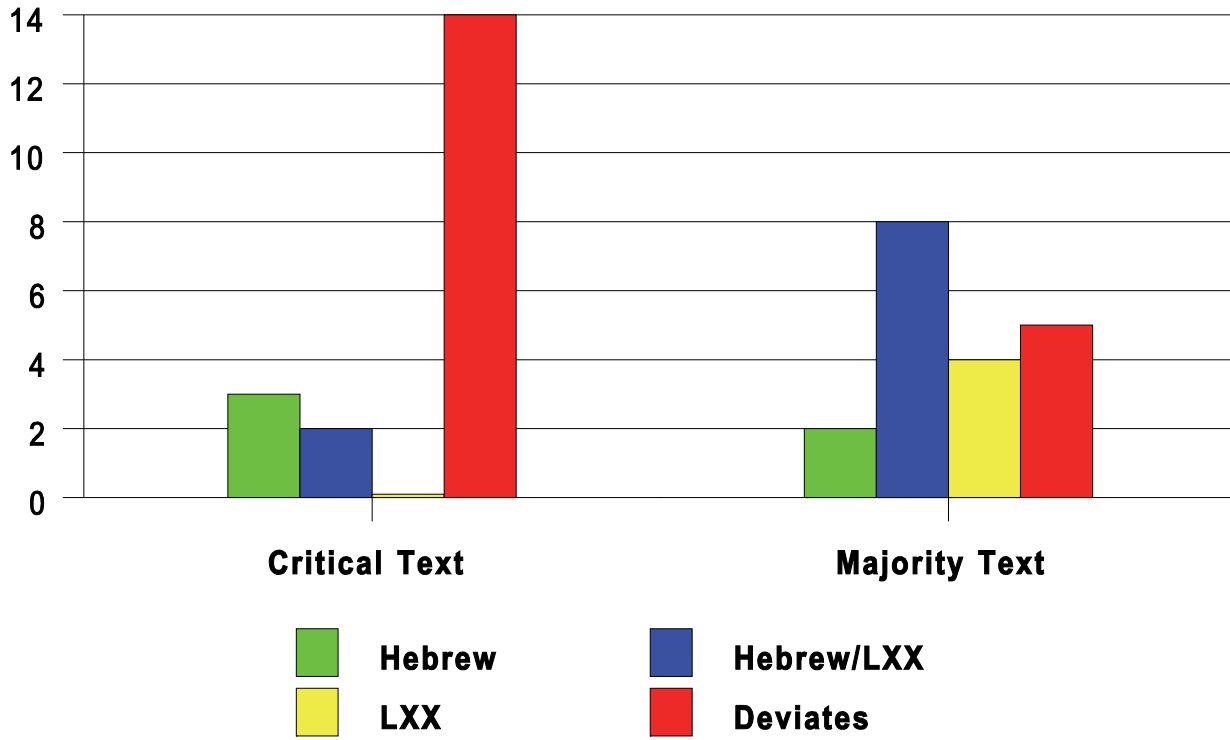
<sup>8</sup>The New Testament only quotes the last portion of this Old Testament passage. The LXX differs from the Hebrew only in word order, which the majority of New Testament manuscripts preserve. The critical text follows the LXX, but then skips back to the first part of the LXX which is not being quoted (or, perhaps, reverts to the Hebrew word order) thereby adding the disputed phrase.



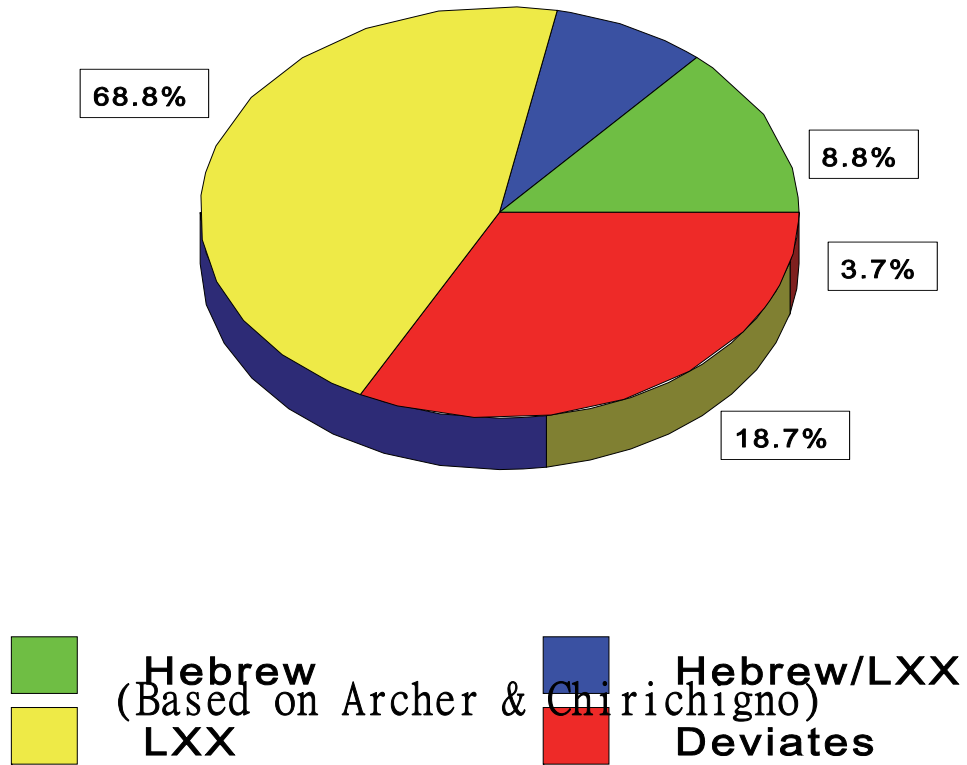
# NT Variants in OT Quotations



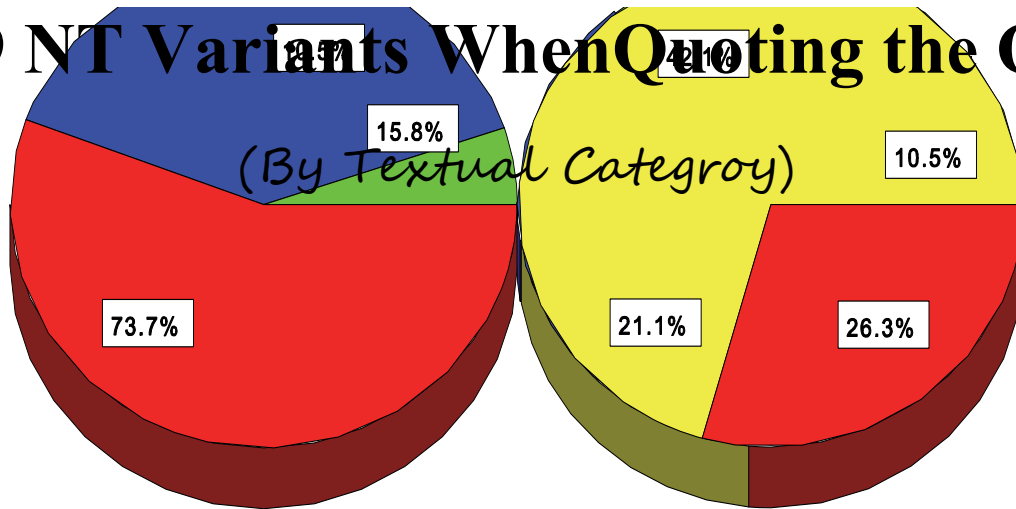
# NT Variants in OT Quotation



# OT Quotations in the NT



# 19 NT Variants When Quoting the OT



CRITICAL TEXT  
■ Hebrew  
■ LXX

MAJORITY TEXT  
■ Hebrew/LXX  
■ Deviates

# 19 NT Variants When Quoting the OT

