

Bill Warren, Allyson Presswood Nance, and Katie Unsworth Morgan, “Canon and Scripture Development in Light of the Infancy Gospels”

The Infancy Gospels, specifically The Proto-Gospel of James, The Infancy Gospel of Thomas, The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, and The Latin Infancy Gospels (J Composition) contain extensive quotations, allusions, and structural similarities to the Septuagint, the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke, and to other (proto-) New Testament texts. Scholars have noted some inter-textual incidences previously, but a thorough survey of the Old Testament (specifically the LXX) and New Testament quotations, allusions, and structural borrowings in these Infancy Gospels (IGs) needs more attention as a window into canon development and into the nature of the communities behind this type of use of OT texts. This paper will examine the critical texts of several of the IGs using Richard Hays’ methodology for identifying allusions (Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul). For each IG, the quotations, allusions, and structural similarities to canonical texts will be isolated, then the canonical text(s) referenced and the type of adaptation will be determined. These results will then be analyzed, with conclusions focused on: 1) the similarities and differences between uses of the OT and uses of the NT by the IGs, 2) the similarities and differences between uses of “canonical” texts by earlier IGs and later IGs, and 3) the type of adaptations by each IG author.