Targum and testament revisited aramaic paraphrases of the hebrew bible a light on the new testament

Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible – A Light on the New Testament ** The New Testament, a cornerstone of Christian faith, often seems isolated from its Jewish roots. However, a deeper understanding of Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible, known as Targums, reveals a fascinating tapestry connecting the two. These ancient interpretations, meticulously crafted by Jewish scholars, offer invaluable insights into the context and meaning behind the texts that shaped both the Old and New Testaments. This exploration delves into the world of Targums, examining their impact on the New Testament and how they shed light on the historical and theological landscape of early Christianity. What are Targums? Targums are Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible. Aramaic was the lingua franca of the Jewish people during the period leading up to and including the New Testament era. Rather than literal translations, Targums were essentially interpretive explanations, often adding context, commentary, and even embellishments to the original Hebrew text. They served a crucial function in synagogues, translating and explaining the scriptures to the masses who may not have fully understood Hebrew.

Importance of Aramaic in the Ancient World

Aramaic, spoken throughout the Near East, had significant cultural and linguistic importance. This common language facilitated communication and trade, but also had a profound impact on Jewish communities across the diaspora. For centuries, it became the language of everyday life for many Jewish people, alongside Hebrew, which continued to retain its sacred and liturgical significance.

Different Targums and Their Approaches

Several Targums exist, each with its unique approach to the text. For instance, the Targum Jonathan on the Prophets focuses on expanding and elucidating the original prophetic pronouncements. The Targums of Onqelos and Pseudo-Jonathan are well known, and each presents a unique perspective, reflecting varying hermeneutical traditions. Targums and the New Testament: A Bridge Between Worlds The influence of Targums on the New Testament is substantial. Early Christians, largely Jewish themselves, utilized these Targums to understand the Hebrew Bible. This means that many New Testament citations and interpretations often drew upon the frameworks and understandings already presented in the Targums.

Case Study: The Parable of the Good Samaritan

For example, the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) often draws upon the broader understanding of "neighbor" found in the Jewish context. The Targums help shed light on the evolving understanding of who constituted "neighbor" in Jewish society at the time. Table: Comparison of Targumic Interpretations and New Testament Parallels | **Hebrew Bible Passage** | **Targumic Interpretation** | **New Testament Parallel** | **Key Takeaway** | ||||| | **Exodus 3:14** | **God's self-designation as "I Am Who I Am"** | **Jesus's declaration "I Am" in John** | **Connection between God's identity and Jesus's divinity.** | | **Psalm 22** | **Christological implications** | **Suffering Servant imagery in Isaiah** | **Jewish understanding of Messiah's suffering anticipated in the New Testament.** | | **Deuteronomy 18** | **Prophet-like figure** | **Jesus's identity as the Prophet** | **New Testament's emphasis on Jesus fulfilling Old Testament prophecies.** | Key Benefits of Studying Targums for Understanding the New Testament • Contextual Understanding: Targums offer crucial context for interpreting New Testament passages, especially those that cite or allude to the Hebrew Bible. • Bridging the Jewish-Christian Divide: By highlighting shared hermeneutical frameworks, Targums can bridge the often-perceived gap between Judaism and Christianity. • Understanding Jewish Thought: *Understanding Targums allows one to gain insight into Jewish thought and practices during the period leading up to and including the New Testament era.* • Explaining New Testament Language: Targums often preserve Aramaic terms and idioms that the New

Testament frequently uses, providing clarification for modern readers. • Evaluating Interpretations: Targums can help evaluate the validity of various New Testament interpretations by providing alternative interpretations of the texts. Further Exploration: Related Topics

The Importance of Jewish Intertextuality

The relationship between Targums, the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament highlights the crucial role of Jewish intertextuality. This means understanding how biblical texts were interpreted and reinterpreted within different Jewish communities and traditions.

The Role of Hellenistic Judaism

Hellenistic Judaism played a significant role in shaping the transmission of biblical texts and their interpretations, influencing both the Targums and the later development of early Christianity. This demonstrates the interplay of cultural and linguistic factors in shaping the evolution of religious ideas. Real-Life Applications • Biblical Studies: Students and scholars of biblical studies can gain invaluable insights into the historical and cultural contexts of the texts. • Interfaith Dialogue: *An understanding of Targums and their role in bridging Jewish and Christian traditions is essential for productive interfaith dialogue and understanding.* • New Testament Exegesis: **Targums are indispensable tools for meticulous New Testament interpretation.** Conclusion: *Targums are far more than ancient translations; they are windows into the minds of Jewish interpreters and communities during a period of immense religious and cultural change. By carefully studying these paraphrases, we not only gain a deeper understanding of the New Testament but also appreciate the continuity between Jewish tradition and early Christianity. The insights derived from this examination bridge the gap between the Old Testament and New Testament, providing a richer, more complete picture of the religious landscape of the time.* Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): 1. Are Targums considered authoritative? *Targums are not considered divinely inspired in the same way as the Hebrew Bible. They are valuable historical documents that offer insight into how the Jewish community understood and interpreted scripture. 2.* How do Targums influence modern interpretations of the New Testament? **By providing context and alternative interpretations, Targums can help us refine our understanding of New Testament references and citations. 3.** Why are Targums important for interfaith understanding? **Targums show the common roots and shared interpretations that existed between Jewish communities and early Christian communities, promoting a more nuanced understanding. 4.** Can Targums be used to support specific theological arguments? *While Targums can provide context and understanding, it's crucial to avoid using them to support specific theological arguments in a manner that misrepresents their nature as interpretive tools rather than authoritative texts. 5.* Where can I learn more about Targums?** Several academic resources, libraries, and online databases provide in-depth information about Targums and their historical and textual contexts. This exploration has hopefully provided a more nuanced view of the role of Targums in shaping our understanding of the New Testament, highlighting the vital connection between Judaism and Christianity.

Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible Shedding Light on the New Testament

Imagine stepping back in time, not just to the era of Jesus and his disciples, but further, to a vibrant period when the Hebrew Bible, the very foundation of Jewish faith, was being understood and explained in a new language – Aramaic. This is the fascinating world of the Targumim, ancient Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible. For centuries, these texts were often overlooked or misunderstood, but a closer look, a “revisited” examination, reveals their profound significance, particularly in illuminating the context and meaning of the New Testament.

For many, the connection between the Aramaic Targumim and the New Testament might not be immediately obvious. After all, the New Testament is primarily written in Koine Greek. However, the linguistic and cultural landscape of first-century Judea was deeply

infused with Aramaic. Jesus and his disciples spoke Aramaic. Many of the everyday interactions, teachings, and even some of the very words recorded in the Gospels echo this Aramaic heritage. This is where the Targumim become invaluable historical and exegetical tools, acting as a crucial bridge between the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament.

What Exactly Are the Targumim?

The word "Targum" itself means "translation" or "interpretation" in Aramaic. These weren't simply word-for-word translations of the Hebrew scriptures. Instead, they were dynamic, explanatory paraphrases that aimed to make the sacred texts accessible and relevant to the Jewish people who increasingly spoke Aramaic in their daily lives. Think of them as the ancient equivalent of a modern commentary or a widely accessible study Bible.

A Spectrum of Interpretation: Different Types of Targumim

It's important to understand that there isn't just *one* Targum. Over time, various traditions and interpretations emerged, leading to different Targumim for different books of the Hebrew Bible. Some of the most prominent include:

1. **Targum Onkelos:** This is the most well-known and widely accepted Targum for the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible). It's generally considered more literal in its approach, aiming to maintain a close adherence to the Hebrew text while still offering explanatory clarifications.
2. **Targum Jonathan:** This Targum covers the Prophets (Nevi'im) and is known for being more interpretive and expansive than Targum Onkelos. It often includes homiletical elements and midrashic expansions, offering theological insights and applications.
3. **Jerusalem Targumim (Targum Yerushalmi):** These Targumim for the Torah are characterized by their highly interpretive nature. They are often much longer than Targum Onkelos and contain a wealth of aggadic (non-legalistic lore) material, legends, and theological interpretations.
4. **Targumim for the Writings (Ketuvim):** Targumim for the poetic and wisdom books are more varied and less standardized than those for the Torah and Prophets.

The existence of these different Targumim highlights the dynamic nature of biblical interpretation within Judaism and the diverse ways in which scripture was engaged with. They demonstrate a living tradition, not a static one.

Why "Revisited"? The Growing Importance of Targumim Studies

For a long time, scholars, particularly in the West, focused heavily on Greek translations of the Old Testament (like the Septuagint) when studying the New Testament background. While the Septuagint is undoubtedly important, the Targumim offer a unique and often complementary perspective. The "revisited" aspect signifies a renewed appreciation for the Targumim's scholarly value and their crucial role in understanding the world of Jesus and the early church.

Bridging the Linguistic Divide: Aramaic in the New Testament World

The first-century Jewish world was multilingual. While Greek was the lingua franca of the Roman Empire and used for much of the New Testament, Aramaic remained the vernacular language for many, especially in Judea and Galilee. Jesus himself preached and taught in Aramaic, and many of his sayings preserved in the Gospels retain their Aramaic flavor.

Consider some of the direct Aramaic words and phrases that appear in the Greek New Testament: "Talitha cumi" (Mark 5:41, "Little girl, I say to you, get up"), "Ephphatha" (Mark 7:34, "Be opened"), and the profound cry from the cross, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (Mark 15:34, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). These are not mere linguistic curiosities; they are windows into the actual language spoken by Jesus and his followers.

The Targumim, as Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible, provide us with an invaluable insight into how these biblical texts were understood and explained in the very language and cultural milieu that shaped Jesus' teachings. They offer a linguistic and interpretive lens that the Septuagint, while important, doesn't fully replicate.

A Light on the New Testament: How Targumim Illuminate Scripture

The most exciting aspect of studying the Targumim in relation to the New Testament is the way they illuminate puzzling passages, clarify theological concepts, and reveal the shared interpretive traditions of first-century Judaism.

Understanding Messianic Expectations

One of the most significant areas where Targumim shed light is on Jewish messianic expectations. The Hebrew Bible contains prophecies about a coming Messiah, and the Targumim often expand upon these prophecies, providing details and interpretations that were circulating in Jewish thought. When we read the New Testament's claims about Jesus as the Messiah, understanding these Targumic interpretations helps us grasp how those claims would have been received and understood by a Jewish audience.

For instance, Targumim often emphasize the Messiah's role as a descendant of David, a king who will bring peace and justice, and a figure who will restore Israel. By examining how the Targumim interpreted passages like Isaiah 11 or Psalm 2, we gain a deeper appreciation for the New Testament's portrait of Jesus as the fulfillment of these ancient hopes. This is a crucial aspect for anyone interested in **messianic prophecy** and its interpretation.

Clarifying Key Theological Concepts

Theological concepts that might seem straightforward in the New Testament often have deeper roots and more nuanced understandings within the Jewish tradition, as reflected in the Targumim. Concepts like God's covenant, his immanence and transcendence, and the nature of divine redemption are all explored in the Targumim.

For example, the Targumim's treatment of God's name and his presence can offer valuable context for understanding New Testament Christology. They often use circumlocutions for God to avoid anthropomorphism or to emphasize his transcendence. Understanding these interpretive strategies helps us appreciate how the New Testament authors spoke about Jesus in relation to God.

Illuminating Parables and Teachings

Jesus' parables are often rich with cultural and religious allusions. The Targumim, with their homiletical and explanatory nature, can provide valuable insights into the background and intended meaning of these parables. They reveal the interpretive methods and the common understandings of biblical narratives that were part of Jesus' audience's intellectual and spiritual landscape.

Similarly, some of Jesus' teachings find echoes in the interpretive expansions and ethical teachings found in the Targumim. This doesn't mean the Targumim are a direct source for Jesus' words, but rather that they represent a shared cultural and interpretive heritage that informed his ministry and the early Christian movement. This intersection of **Jewish exegesis** and early Christian thought is a rich field of study.

Understanding Polemic and Dialogue

The Targumim also reveal the apologetic and polemical concerns within Judaism during the period. While the New Testament was being written, there was also a dynamic dialogue, and at times, tension, between developing Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity. Examining the Targumim's interpretations can sometimes reveal how certain biblical passages were understood in ways that might have stood in contrast to emerging Christian interpretations, or, conversely, how they shared common ground.

This is particularly relevant when considering the New Testament's engagement with the Old Testament in arguments and debates. Understanding the Targumic interpretation of a particular prophecy or passage can help us understand the Jewish counter-arguments or the common interpretive framework that the New Testament authors were either building upon or responding to. This interplay between **Jewish thought and early Christianity** is a central theme.

Challenges and Rewards of Targumic Studies

Studying the Targumim is not without its challenges. The texts are in Aramaic, requiring linguistic expertise. Furthermore, the manuscripts are ancient and can be complex to interpret. However, the rewards are immense.

Accessing the "Jewishness" of Jesus

Perhaps the greatest reward of engaging with the Targumim is gaining a deeper appreciation for the "Jewishness" of Jesus and his early followers. The New Testament emerged from a distinctly Jewish context, and the Targumim help us recover that context, moving beyond a solely Hellenistic or Gentile lens. They highlight the continuity between the Old and New Testaments within the Jewish interpretive tradition.

Enriching Biblical Understanding

For anyone seeking a richer, more nuanced understanding of both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, the Targumim offer an invaluable resource. They provide a window into how God's Word was understood and applied by the very people to whom Jesus ministered. This is essential for students of **biblical studies**, theology, and church history.

Key Takeaways for the Modern Reader

So, what can the modern reader take away from this "revisiting" of Targum and Testament? It's a reminder that:

1. The New Testament is deeply rooted in the Jewish world of the Old Testament.
2. Aramaic was the spoken language of Jesus and his disciples, and it influenced their understanding of scripture.
3. The Targumim offer a valuable interpretive lens into first-century Jewish understanding of the Hebrew Bible.
4. Engaging with Targumic studies can profoundly enrich our comprehension of biblical texts, messianic prophecies, and core theological concepts.

The study of Targumim and their relationship to the New Testament is a vibrant and ongoing field. As scholars continue to delve into these ancient Aramaic paraphrases, they consistently uncover new layers of meaning and connection, illuminating the profound dialogue between the covenants and revealing the enduring power of God's Word across different linguistic and cultural landscapes. The Targumim are not just ancient translations; they are vibrant witnesses to a living faith, offering a unique and essential light on the New Testament for us today.

Revisiting the Targum and Testament Paraphrases: An Aramaic Lens on the Hebrew Bible and Its New Testament Echoes The interplay between Aramaic paraphrases known as the Targums and the textual foundations of the Hebrew Bible offers a profound window into the linguistic, theological, and cultural dynamics of the ancient Near East. These Aramaic interpretations were not mere translations but dynamic reimaginings—deep exegetical responses that preserved sacred texts while breathing new life into their meanings. When viewed alongside the New Testament, the Targums reveal subtle yet significant parallels that enrich our understanding of biblical continuity and transformation across Jewish and early Christian traditions.

The Targums: Aramaic Interpretive Bridges

Emerging during the late Second Temple period, the Targums served as authoritative Aramaic expositions of the Hebrew scriptures. Far more than linguistic conversions, they functioned as theological commentaries, aimed at clarifying difficult passages, embedding contemporary context, and strengthening communal identity. The Targum Onkelos, traditionally attributed to Rabbi Onkelos, provides a meticulous rendering of the Pentateuch, while the Targum Jonathan offers a more expansive, midrashic approach to the Prophets and Writings. These texts reflect a vibrant tradition of scriptural engagement, where Aramaic became the vehicle not only for accessibility but for theological depth. By translating and expanding Hebrew, the Targums preserved the spirit of the original while adapting it for a diaspora audience deeply immersed in Aramaic-speaking life.

These paraphrased versions reveal a nuanced relationship between text and interpretation. The translators did not merely convert

words—they interpreted them through a lens shaped by Jewish thought, eschatological hope, and lived experience. This interpretive layer underscores how sacred texts evolve, shaped by the communities that inherit and reinterpret them. The Targums thus stand as living witnesses to a period when Hebrew scripture was not static but dynamically alive, resonating across generations and languages.

Paraphrases and Parallels with the New Testament

The connection between the Targums and the New Testament reveals intriguing textual and thematic resonances. Though not direct sources, the Targums reflect interpretive currents that prefigure or align with New Testament themes. For instance, the Targumic emphasis on divine justice, mercy, and the coming of a righteous figure echoes in Jesus' teachings and the evangelists' portrayals of Christ's mission. Aramaic paraphrases often highlight ethical imperatives and prophetic expectations that parallel NT discourse—such as calls to repentance, social justice, and the inauguration of God's kingdom.

Moreover, the Targums' use of Aramaic as a medium of revelation mirrors the New Testament's own linguistic and cultural shift—from Hebrew to Greek—suggesting a broader pattern of sacred language adapting to community needs. This adaptability underscores a shared principle: divine truth is conveyed not only in fixed words but through evolving interpretive forms that meet people where they are. The Targum's living engagement with scripture offers a model for understanding how early Christian writings, rooted in Jewish scriptural heritage, could emerge as both continuity and innovation.

Applications and Enduring Benefits

Studying the Targumic paraphrases alongside the Hebrew Bible and New Testament opens rich horizons for modern scholarship and spiritual reflection. For theologians and biblical scholars, these texts illuminate the historical context in which sacred ideas were formed and transmitted. The Targums demonstrate how translation is inherently interpretive, shaping doctrine, identity, and worship. For educators and students, they offer a compelling case study in intertextuality—showing how texts interact, influence, and reimagine one another across time.

Beyond academia, the Targums inspire contemporary efforts to make sacred scripture accessible and meaningful across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Their legacy challenges modern communities to embrace translation not as a mechanical act but as a creative, theological endeavor—one that honors tradition while engaging new generations. In a globalized world where religious texts must speak across divides, the Targums stand as enduring exemplars of faithful innovation and cross-cultural communication.

Looking to the Future: Continuing Dialogue Across Time

As digital tools and interdisciplinary methods advance, the study of Aramaic paraphrases and their biblical connections will deepen our understanding of scripture's living heritage. Future research may uncover new layers of influence between Targumic exegesis and early Christian literature, revealing how these ancient interpretations shaped enduring theological concepts. Moreover, the Targums' emphasis on communal meaning and ethical living invites modern readers to see scripture not as a relic but as a dynamic resource for justice, compassion, and spiritual growth.

Ultimately, revisiting the Targum and testament paraphrases through an Aramaic lens reaffirms the Bible's vitality. It reminds us that sacred texts are not fixed monuments but living conversations—between generations, languages, and faiths. By embracing this living tradition, we honor the past while illuminating paths forward, ensuring that ancient wisdom continues to inspire and transform lives in an ever-changing world.

Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible Shedding Light on the New Testament

The relationship between the ancient Jewish Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Targumim, and the New Testament is a subject of enduring scholarly fascination. Often overlooked in popular discussions of biblical origins, these Aramaic

translations and expansions offer a unique window into the interpretative landscape of Second Temple Judaism. This article delves into the significance of the Targumim and Testaments, exploring how these paraphrases illuminate the world in which Christianity emerged and provide invaluable context for understanding the New Testament text.

What are the Targumim? The Aramaic Context of the Hebrew Bible

The Targumim are a collection of Aramaic translations and interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, developed primarily between the 3rd and 10th centuries CE. While the Hebrew Bible was the sacred language of Judaism, Aramaic had become the vernacular spoken by many Jews in the post-exilic period and throughout the Roman era. Consequently, public readings of the Torah and Prophets in synagogues often required an oral or written translation into Aramaic to ensure understanding among the congregants. These translations evolved from simple word-for-word renditions into more elaborate paraphrases, incorporating homiletical elements, explanations, and even theological clarifications.

The most prominent Targumim include:

1. **Targum Onkelos:** A widely accepted Targum to the Pentateuch (Torah), known for its relatively literal approach, though it still offers interpretative insights.
2. **Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel:** A Targum to the Prophets (Nevi'im), which is more expansive and interpretative than Targum Onkelos.
3. **Targumim to the Writings (Ketuvim):** A diverse and less standardized collection of Targumim for the remaining books of the Hebrew Bible.

These texts are not merely linguistic curiosities; they represent a vibrant tradition of biblical interpretation that predates and coexists with early Christianity. Understanding the Aramaic paraphrases is crucial for grasping the hermeneutical methods and theological currents prevalent in the Jewish world of Jesus and his disciples.

The 'Testament' Connection: Early Christian Interpretations and the Targumic Influence

The phrase "Targum and Testament Revisited" directly points to the intersection of these Aramaic paraphrases with early Christian writings, particularly the New Testament. The "Testament" in this context refers to the New Testament, which, while written in Koine Greek, is deeply rooted in Jewish thought and tradition. Scholars have increasingly recognized that the interpretative strategies employed by the New Testament authors often resonate with those found in the Targumim.

This doesn't necessarily imply direct borrowing in every instance, but rather a shared hermeneutical environment. The New Testament writers, being Jewish themselves, would have been familiar with the prevailing methods of biblical exegesis prevalent in their time, many of which are reflected in the Targumim. This includes:

1. **Midrashic interpretation:** The practice of elaborating on biblical texts, drawing out hidden meanings, and applying them to new contexts.
2. **Pesher interpretation:** A form of interpretation found in some Qumran scrolls, where biblical prophecies are understood as being fulfilled in the author's own time.
3. **Divergent readings and textual variations:** The Targumim sometimes present readings that differ from the Masoretic Text, offering alternative textual traditions that may have been known to New Testament authors.

By "revisiting" the Targumim, scholars aim to re-evaluate the New Testament in light of this rich Jewish interpretative heritage. This approach helps to move beyond a purely Hellenistic understanding of early Christianity and re-center its Jewish roots.

A Light on the New Testament: Specific Examples of Targumic Influence

The impact of the Targumim on the New Testament can be observed in various ways. Examining specific passages and themes reveals how these Aramaic paraphrases provide critical context and clarity.

Messianic Expectations and the Person of Jesus

The Targumim often reveal a nuanced understanding of messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Bible. While some Targumim anticipate a kingly, Davidic Messiah, others emphasize a priestly or even a suffering servant figure. The way the Targumim interpret passages like Isaiah 53, for instance, can offer parallels to the New Testament's portrayal of Jesus' atoning sacrifice.

For example, Targum Jonathan's rendering of Isaiah 53, while not identical to the Christian interpretation, emphasizes the suffering of a righteous individual who bears the sins of the people. This demonstrates that the concept of a suffering messianic figure was not entirely alien to Jewish thought prior to Christianity. Furthermore, the frequent use of the divine name "Memra" (Word) in the Targumim, representing God's active presence and action in the world, has been seen by some scholars as a precursor to the Johannine concept of the Logos.

Christological Titles and Concepts

Titles and concepts applied to Jesus in the New Testament, such as "Son of God," "Son of Man," and references to divine wisdom, find echoes and antecedents in Jewish thought as reflected in the Targumim.

The "Son of Man" title, famously used by Jesus, has deep roots in Daniel 7, and its interpretation in the Targumim and other Jewish literature provides valuable insight into its potential meanings within Jesus' own context. Similarly, the concept of divine wisdom (Hokmah) as an attribute or agent of God, often personified in Proverbs, finds parallels in the Targumic understanding of the Memra and could inform the New Testament's portrayal of Jesus as divine wisdom.

Interpretative Methods in the Gospels and Epistles

The way New Testament authors interpret Old Testament prophecies, often employing allegorical or typological methods, aligns with the interpretative strategies found in the Targumim. When the Gospels, for instance, link Old Testament events and prophecies to Jesus, they are often doing so in a manner consistent with the midrashic approach characteristic of the Targumim.

Consider the use of fulfillment formulas like "this was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet..." found in the Gospels. The Targumim demonstrate a similar hermeneutical impulse to connect biblical texts to contemporary realities and theological concerns. Understanding the Targumic hermeneutics can help us appreciate the intentionality and theological depth behind these New Testament interpretations.

Specific Passages and Linguistic Parallels

Beyond broad themes, specific linguistic and interpretative parallels exist. For instance, the unique use of certain Aramaic phrases or the rendering of specific Hebrew terms in the Targumim can sometimes shed light on the Greek wording of the New Testament, suggesting underlying Aramaic source material or shared interpretative traditions.

The presence of Aramaicisms in the Gospels, particularly in the sayings of Jesus, is well-documented. However, the Targumim offer a broader corpus of Aramaic biblical paraphrasing, providing a richer context for understanding these linguistic phenomena and their potential interpretative implications. Sometimes, a seemingly obscure phrase in the New Testament becomes clearer when compared to its treatment in a Targum.

The Importance of Revisiting: Re-evaluating Early Christianity

The ongoing work of "revisiting" the Targumim in relation to the New Testament is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Underscoring Jewish Roots:** It helps to firmly anchor early Christianity within its Jewish matrix, challenging historical tendencies to de-Judaize the origins of the faith.
2. **Enriching Exegesis:** It provides a more robust and nuanced understanding of New Testament texts by offering alternative interpretative frameworks and contextualizing difficult passages.
3. **Challenging Stereotypes:** It combats simplistic notions about the relationship between Judaism and early Christianity, revealing a more complex and dynamic interaction.
4. **Illuminating Theological Developments:** It clarifies how certain theological concepts and doctrines evolved within a Jewish milieu, providing a more accurate historical trajectory.

The study of the Targumim and their connection to the New Testament is an active and evolving field. New discoveries and fresh analytical approaches continue to deepen our understanding of this vital link.

SEO Considerations and Keywords

For those seeking information on this topic, relevant search terms would include: "Targum and Testament," "Aramaic paraphrases Hebrew Bible," "New Testament Jewish context," "Targumic influence New Testament," "Second Temple Judaism," "biblical interpretation ancient Judaism," "early Christianity Jewish roots," "Messiah in Targumim," "Logos Targumim," "Memra," "Gospel interpretation Targumim," "Aramaic Bible translations," and "understanding the New Testament through Jewish eyes." The detailed exploration of these themes and the use of related terms naturally incorporates these keywords, enhancing discoverability.

Conclusion: A Continuous Revelation

The "Targum and Testament Revisited" is not merely an academic exercise; it is a continuous revelation of the deep and intertwined heritage of Judaism and Christianity. By engaging with the Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible, we gain a more profound appreciation for the biblical world that shaped Jesus and his first followers. These ancient texts act as a crucial light, illuminating the linguistic, theological, and interpretative landscape of the New Testament and enabling a richer, more historically grounded understanding of its message and origins.

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Questions & Answers About targum and testament revisited aramaic paraphrases of the hebrew bible a light on the new testament

No	Question	Answer
1	What exactly are Targums, and how do they shed light on the New Testament?	Targums are ancient Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible. They were developed to make the scriptures accessible to Jews who spoke Aramaic, not Hebrew. Their value for the New Testament lies in revealing the interpretive methods and theological understandings prevalent in Second Temple Judaism, providing a crucial background for understanding Jesus' teachings and the early Christian message.
2	Why is the title 'Targum and Testament Revisited' significant for understanding these Aramaic paraphrases?	The 'Revisited' in the title suggests a fresh, updated look at the Targums in relation to the New Testament. It implies that scholars are re-examining their connections, possibly uncovering new insights or challenging older interpretations, and highlighting their continued relevance for biblical studies.
3	How did the linguistic shift from Hebrew to Aramaic necessitate the creation of Targums?	As Aramaic became the common vernacular in ancient Israel, knowledge of Hebrew declined. Targums arose as spoken translations and explanations during synagogue readings of the Torah. They ensured that the message of the Hebrew Bible remained understood by the general populace, bridging the linguistic gap.
4	Can you give an example of how a Targum might illuminate a New Testament passage?	Certainly. For instance, Targums often emphasize God's immanence and the concept of the 'Memra' (Word of God) as an active agent. This helps us understand New Testament Christology, particularly how Jesus is presented as the Word made flesh (John 1:14) within a Jewish context familiar with these concepts.
5	Beyond linguistic insight, what theological connections do Targums offer for New Testament studies?	Targums reveal a Jewish Messianic expectation and a developed understanding of divine kingship, covenant, and redemption. These themes resonate deeply with the New Testament's presentation of Jesus as the Messiah and the establishment of a new covenant. They show continuity and development of Jewish thought.
6	What are some of the challenges or debates surrounding the 'revisiting' of Targums and their relation to the New Testament?	Challenges include accurately dating specific Targums, determining their precise relationship to oral traditions, and avoiding anachronistic interpretations. Debates often revolve around the degree to which Targumic material was known or influential to specific New Testament authors and the exact nature of the theological parallels drawn.

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