

Old Testament Parallels

In their 2006 book, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East*,¹ Matthews and Benjamin arranged the material according to the canonical order of the Old Testament and identify six parallels across the various literary traditions: genre, vocabulary, motif, social institutions, plots, and historical events.

Beginning with the book of Genesis, the authors note clear parallels between the Egyptian Hymns to Ptah and to Atum, the Babylonian Enuma Elish and the epics of Gilgamesh, Atrahasis, Adapa, and others. In the book of Exodus, parallels are found between Sargon of Agade; and in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, parallels are evident between the Codes of Shulgi and Hammurabi, the Hittites, the Middle Assyrian Code and others. Joshua and Judges reveal parallels between the Annals of Tuthmosis III, Ramesses II, the El-Amarna Letters, and others. The books of Psalms and Lamentations find parallels in the Laments of Ur, the stories of Baal and Anat, and the Hymn to Aten. Proverbs and the Song of Songs are linked with Egypt and the teachings of Ptah-Hotep, Khety, Amenemope, as well as others. The books of the prophets are paralleled by the older tales of Ishtar and Tammuz, the vision of Nefertiti, the Mari Letters, and others.

1. Victor Harold Matthews, and Don C Benjamin. *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient near East*. New York, Paulist Press, 1997.

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