CHAPTER FOUR

TESTIMONIA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:
PAUL'S WRITINGS; MATTHEW'S FORMULA CITATIONS;
SPEECHES IN ACTS; AND HEBREWS 1-2

4.1 Overview of the Chapter

I shall now present arguments for the use of oral testimonia traditions and written testimonia collections in the NT itself. I shall employ the criteria for detecting testimonia use which were discussed in the first three chapters. As with the collections studied in chapter three, I will (1) discuss the function of the scriptural quotation or allusion within the NT work; (2) provide evidence that the NT work draws on a previous oral or written testimonia source (whether Jewish or Christian); and (3) determine as far as possible the original form and function of that testimonia source. In step two, in addition to surveying the use of the particular quotation within Second Temple Jewish literature (to determine if the NT takes over Jewish testimonia) I will also examine Christian literature outside the NT to determine what light these traditions can shed on the NT passages.

In this chapter I will examine discrete sections of the NT: Paul's writings; the formula citations in Matthew; the speeches in Acts; and Heb 1:5–2:8, leaving for chapter five the study of broader testimonia traditions which are found in various strands of the NT.

4.2 Paul and Testimonia

4.2.1 Evidence for Paul's Use of Testimonia Collections and Traditions

(a) D.A. Koch and Christopher Stanley: Paul's Personal Anthology

Dietrich-Alex Koch and Christopher D. Stanley offer an intriguing variant of the testimonia hypothesis, arguing that Paul worked from his own personal anthology of scriptural citations. They posit that while studying scripture during his far-flung travels, Paul collected biblical extracts on various topics into a working anthology which he later used in letters or sermons. This hypothesis has several advantages:
(1) it provides a more plausible model for Paul's method of quotation than alternative suggestions that Paul looked up individual quotations in bulky and expensive scrolls in the course of composing his letters; (2) it explains the great textual variety evident in Paul's quotations by proposing that Paul collected texts at different travel stops; and (3) it explains such phenomena as Paul's use of a passage in a sense foreign to its original context. Stanley further points to Greek and Roman authors (including Plutarch, Cicero, and Pliny the Elder) who explicitly refer to their own use of such personal anthologies as an aid to composition.

While Koch's and Stanley's arguments are sound, they do not provide adequate criteria to distinguish between Paul's use of a personal anthology and his appropriation of a previously compiled EC. I argue below that Paul does in fact make use of these previously established collections, originally composed in both Jewish and Christian life-settings.

(b) 1 Cor 15:3–4: The Meaning of κατὰ τὰς γραφάς
Toward the end of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul reminds his readers of the tradition that he has passed on to them:

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures (κατὰ τὰς γραφάς), and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures (κατὰ τὰς γραφάς).

(1 Cor 15:3–4)

Important for our purposes is the twice repeated κατὰ τὰς γραφάς: the first linked to “that Christ died for our sins,” the second to “that he was raised on the third day.” For our study of the form and function of testimonia, two questions are central: (1) Does this formulation have specific scriptures in view, and if so, which ones? and

1 Arguing against the suggestion that Paul worked from a single scroll in composing his letters, Stanley notes that even Paul's use of a single book (Isaiah) in a single letter (Romans) shows an extensive variety of textual traditions. Thus Paul's Isaiah quotations in Romans agree with a unified LXX tradition (e.g., 9:29); with diverse strands of a divided LXX tradition (e.g., 2:24); with a “Hebraizing” revision of the Old Greek text (e.g., 10:15); and with a “Christianized” text (9:33). In addition, Stanley judges the source of certain quotations “wholly uncertain” (1:17; 10:20) (Language of Scripture, 255 n. 12).

2 Ibid., 73–78. Stanley notes that he follows the lead of Koch (Schrift als Zeuge, 99) in proposing Paul's use of a personal anthology.

3 Stanley, Language of Scripture, 74–76; cf. sect. 2.3.6 above.