

History of Received Text

**Was the Septuagint the Bible of
Christ and the Apostles**
Study Paks 3A and 3B

Dr. Phil Stringer

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I. CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

Conventional wisdom - _____ states that Christ and the apostles routinely used the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Old Testament done about 200 B.C.) as their daily Bible and quoted from it often in the New Testament.

What is this statement based on? Does Christ or the apostles ever say that they are quoting _____ the Septuagint? The answer is clearly NO! Yet it is not hard to see that the "conventional wisdom" is dogmatic—that Christ and the apostles were using the Greek translation.

For example "Christ frequently quoted from the Septuagint. The Septuagint, with dates ranging from 250 to 160 B.C., is a Greek translation of the Old Testament. Christ used the Septuagint frequently in His quotations and references to the Old Testament. The use of the Septuagint was widespread in Christ's day!" (Robert Lightner, *The Savior and the Scriptures*, p. 13).

"The Septuagint was the Bible of Christ and the apostles, they most usually quoted from it." (Ira Price, *Ancestry of Our English Bible*, p. 182).

"But as the Septuagint is the oldest translation of the Hebrew Bible, as it is constantly quoted by the writers of the New Testament. . ." *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, p. 432)
"It was the Bible of most writers of the New Testament. . ." (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, p. 2724)

Dozens (and probably hundreds) of other such examples could be cited. But how do they know? Neither Christ nor the apostles ever said they were quoting from the Septuagint! The New Testament never mentions the Septuagint. Why is the idea that Christ and the apostles used the Septuagint the conventional wisdom of our day?

II. WHY ARE SO MANY "SCHOLARS" SO DEVOTED TO THE SEPTUAGINT? -- THE APOCRYPHA

Why are so many scholars determined to believe that Christ and the apostles used the Septuagint?

Roman Catholics use the idea that Christ quoted the Septuagint _____. Their reasoning goes like this: "Christ used and honored the Septuagint, the Septuagint includes the Apocrypha, so Christ

honored and authorized the Apocrypha." Since no Hebrew Old Testament ever included the books of the Apocrypha, the Septuagint is the only source the Catholics have for justifying their canon. Many Reformers and Lutherans wrote at great length refuting the validity of the Septuagint.

One Catholic lesson posted on the Internet states: "Me, I will trust the version of the Old Testament that was loved by Peter and Paul." This is in a lesson entitled "The Canon of the Bible and the Septuagint." The only reason given for accepting the Apocrypha is that Christ and the apostles quoted the Septuagint. One quote reads, "Let me reiterate: the then 300+ year old Septuagint version of Scripture was good enough for Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Paul, etc, which is evident in their referencing it over 300 times (out of 360 Old Testament references) in their New Testament writings - and the Septuagint includes seven books and parts of Esther and Daniel that were removed from Protestant Bibles some 1,600 years after the birth of Christ." Almost every "fact" given in the statement is incorrect but it illustrates why Roman Catholicism is so devoted to the Septuagint.

III. THE BIBLE IN MY OWN WORDS!

The Septuagint is a very loose translation of the Old Testament. It has much more in common with the "Revised Standard Version" or even "The Living Bible" than the King James Bible. It is used _____ . It is used to justify "dynamic equivalence" in translation rather than the formal literal equivalence method (which is based upon the concept of verbal inspiration).

After all, if Christ did not care about the specific words of Scripture, why should we? For example, see *The Nature and Authority of the Bible*, by Raymond Abba, (p. 106). If Christ used the Septuagint then you can put the Bible in your own words in either a paraphrase or your own translation. You are now God and private interpretation is your method of rule and your source of authority.

IV. WHY EVANGELICALS?

It is easy to see why Roman Catholics and modernists are so devoted to the idea that Christ used the Septuagint! But why are so many evangelicals devoted to an idea for which they cannot offer any proof? The answer is simple! Many proud evangelicals value the idea _____ . _____ . It is a fact that the Catholics and modernists will mock you and call you uneducated and unscholarly if you don't believe that Christ used the Septuagint. If you asked them how they know that Christ used the Septuagint they will attack you, often hysterically, (but they won't answer your question).

Far too many evangelicals value acceptance by the world. They substitute conventional wisdom for doing their own research and getting solid answers.

They declare themselves as scholars, they repeat conventional wisdom and they never do any thorough study. They react condescendingly when they are asked questions they cannot answer!

The evidence clearly refutes the idea that the Greek translation of the Old Testament, currently called the Septuagint, was used by Christ and the apostles.

V. WHAT IS THE SEPTUAGINT?

According to *General Biblical Introduction: From God to Us* (by H.S. Miller, p. 220): "The Septuagint Version is a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language for the Greek speaking Jews of Alexandria. The abbreviation is LXX. It is sometimes called the Alexandrian Version."

But why would Christ, when preaching to the Jews of Palestine, use a Greek version designed for the Greek speaking Jews of Alexandria Egypt?

The existence of this translation is based upon a letter called the "Letter of Aristeas." This letter is referred to by Aristobulus (in a letter to Pharaoh Ptolemy Philometer—(182-146 B.C.), Philo (40 A.D.), and Josephus (70 A.D.). It is also referred to by several of the early Christian writers.

Aristeas claims to be a high official in the court of the Egyptian King Ptolemy Philadelphus. According to this letter, the royal librarian, Demetrius Phalaris, suggests that it would be good to have a Greek Translation of the Old Testament in the Egyptian royal library. The king sent Jews living in Egypt (including Aristeas) to Jerusalem to ask for help.

They asked the high priest to send six scribes from each tribe of Israel to Alexandria in Egypt to make this Greek translation of the Old Testament. According to "The Letter of Aristeas," scribes were sent. They were sent to the island of Pharos. There is no suggestion that any Greek scholars were included in this group. They each did their own translation of the first five books of the Old Testament. All 72 translations were identical (after 72 days of translation work). This supposedly proved that the translators were inspired by God!
Of course, no one today believes that this story is factually true _____

One Bible Only? (Roy Beacham and Kevin Bauder) calls it "a mixture of fact and fable" (p.29). Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* says, "The details of this story are undoubtedly fictitious but the letter does relate the authentic fact that the LXX was translated for the use of Greek speaking Jews of Alexandria (p. 308).

But if this story is "fictitious": then there is no "factual" information about the origin of the Septuagint. There are no other historical references to the translation of the Old Testament into Greek in Alexandria. Every other historical reference is a retelling of the story of "The Letter of Aristeas."

The Introduction to the Septuagint (p-ii)(a modern printing of Origen's Septuagint) states that the "Letter of Aristeas" is "...not worthy of notice except for the myth being connected with the authority which this version (LXX) was once supposed to have possessed."

It also says (p-i), "No information, whatever, as to the time and place of their execution (ancient versions), or by whom they were made exists, we simply find such versions in use at particular times..."

The New Schaff - Herzog Religious Encyclopedia admits: "Of the pre-Christian period of its history (referring to the Septuagint) next to nothing is known." (Volume II, p.117) There are no historical references to the Septuagint before the time of Christ except for the "Letter of Aristeas." Aristobulus, Philo, Josephus and all of the early Christian writers refer to the same story. A story that no one today believes!

For some reason the work of the Seventy-two began to be commonly referred to as the LXX or the Seventy. There is no clear explanation for why it is called "the Seventy" instead of "the Seventy-two." The lack of a clear explanation is not unusual in this story.

VI. EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS

Supporters of the "Christ used the Septuagint" theory often refer to early Christian writers (such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyril of Jerusalem and Augustine) as proof that Christ and the apostles used the Septuagint. The writers quoted can all be found in either the Ante-Nicene or Post-Nicene Fathers.

Every one of these men based their acceptance of the LXX on the bogus "Letter of Aristeas." They all accepted it as a fact. They all believed that God had inspired a Greek translation of the Old Testament or at least the Pentateuch. Does anyone that quotes these men believe the legend of the "Letter to Aristeas?" The early Christian writers do not add any other information about Christ using the Septuagint. If you do not believe the legendary story of "The Letter of Aristeas" then these writers do not add anything to the discussion.

Jerome was a contemporary of Augustine. Jerome wanted to see a new translation of the Old Testament into _____ . He and Augustine exchanged letters about this idea. Augustine opposed the use of the Hebrew because he thought the Greek Septuagint was "inspired."

Jerome understood that the Septuagint of his day was developed by Origen. He believed that Origen used several different Greek manuscripts and that all of them had been corrupted! He disputed Augustine's assertion that the apostles usually quoted from the Septuagint! He pointed out that their quotations often don't match any version of the Septuagint or any other Greek Old Testament.

H. S. Miller's classic book, (*General Biblical Introduction: from God to Us*, p. 222)

states that Jerome was the first to challenge the conventional wisdom of his day about "The Letter to Aristeas." But Miller goes on to say that "The Letter to Aristeas" has been doubted, then denied and that "now it has few, if any, defenders."

It is clear that what is called the Septuagint today has nothing to do with the story of "The Letter to Aristeas." What is called the Septuagint today is the work of Origen (almost 200 years after the time of Christ).

Advocates of the "Christ used the Septuagint" view are quick to pass off statements like the one above as "King James propaganda." One writer said: "So, why is the King James only advocate so desperate to put the completion of the Septuagint after the writing of the New Testament Scriptures? It is because the Septuagint is not identical to the Hebrew Scriptures from which the King James was translated, yet Christ and the apostles often quoted it." This attack on the advocates of the King James Bible ignored the testimony of Jerome from the fourth century. The recognition of the history of the Septuagint is not new.

In 1588 (23 years before the release of the King James Bible) William Whitaker wrote: "Learned men question, whether the Greek version of the Scriptures now extant be or be not the version of the seventy elders. The sounder opinion seems to be that _____,

_____ and that the _____.

Aristeas says that the Septuagint version was exactly conformable to the Hebrew originals, so that when read and diligently examined by skillful judges, it was highly approved by the general suffrage of them all. But this of ours differs amazingly from the Hebrew, as well in other places and books, as specially in the Psalms of David." (William Whitaker, *Disputations on Holy Scripture*, 1588, p. 121; Soli Deo Gloria edition 2000)

Whitaker was the foremost defender of the Protestant doctrine of Scripture against Catholicism in his day. He also wrote:

"From these and innumerable examples of the like sort we may concede either this Greek version which has come down to our times is not the same as that published by the seventy Jewish elders, or that it has suffered such infinite and shameful corruptions as to be now of very slight authority. Even Jerome had not the Greek translation of the seventy interpreters in its purity; since he often complains in his commentary that what he had was faulty and corrupt." (*Disputations on Holy Scripture*, p. 122)

This is not "King James Only" propaganda. It is a sound review of history.

In Ira Price's, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, he mentions several important manuscripts of the Septuagint, p. 52-80. Everyone (except the John Rylands' fragment) is the Origen version of the Septuagint - produced long after the New Testament. Every manuscript was produced at least two hundred years after the

New Testament that "scholars" claim that it quotes. "But the earliest extant manuscript of this version (the Septuagint) is dated around 350 A.D..." (H. S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, p. 120)

VII. THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

"Scholars" are fond of saying that the Dead Sea Scrolls prove the Septuagint. In fact the phrase "the Dead Sea Scrolls proves" is used to justify any number of ideas that have nothing to do with the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In fact, there is not _____
_____. There is nothing about the Septuagint in these scrolls. There no quotes from the Septuagint or references to it. None of the Dead Sea Scrolls mention anything about the Septuagint. All of the Dead Sea Scrolls are in Hebrew or Aramaic.

Some of the Old Testament books found among the Dead Sea Scrolls don't match the Hebrew of the traditional text. Some scholars call these Hebrew manuscripts "the Qumran Septuagint." They suggest that these manuscripts were the Septuagint translated back into Hebrew. There is no reference to this in any of the scrolls or anywhere else in history. So why do they believe this? Because they really wish it was true. There is no Qumran Septuagint!

The Dead Sea Scrolls do prove that the "sacred language" (the language used in sermons, rituals and commentaries) of the Jews in Palestine around the time of Christ _____.

VIII. GREEK SCRAPS

One of the most common suggested evidences for a Septuagint translation before the time of Christ is the existence of four manuscript scraps which contain verses from Deuteronomy. These manuscript scraps actually date from before the time of Christ and they are the only manuscripts in Greek of any part of the Old Testament ever found that date before the time of Christ.

The first three manuscript scraps (Rylands Papyrus 458) were found together and contain Deut. 23, 25:13, 26:12, 17, 19 and 28:31-33. A fourth scrap found in Fouad, Egypt repeats some of these verses and adds Deut. 32:7.

No New Testament writer _____ and _____.

These are the only manuscripts of a Greek Old Testament from before the time of Christ. All they prove is that someone had translated part of Deuteronomy into Greek before 150 B.C. Since they are never quoted they don't prove who used this translation or how widespread it was.

IX. THE WORK OF PROFESSOR KAHLE

Professor Paul Kahle (1875-1964) challenged the conventional wisdom of the Septuagint theory. He was not a King James Only advocate. He was a German professor of Oriental Studies. He was a recognized scholar of Mideastern languages. Professor Kahle simply refused to accept the legend of "The Letter of Aristeas." He called it "propaganda." He refused to follow the conventional wisdom that treats "The Letter of Aristeas" as fictional but authoritative history at the same time.

Kahle's theory states that what we call the Septuagint today is actually the result of an attempt to standardize a Greek translation of the Old Testament. This took place over 150 years after the time of Christ and the apostles. He believed that various scraps of manuscripts and attempts at translations may have been consulted. He found some evidence for a Greek translation of the first five books of the Old Testament before the time of Christ but he did not believe that this translation had anything to do with the legend of "The Letter to Aristeas." (See *The Romance of Bible Scripts and Scholars*, Prentice Hall, 1965, p. 16)

He clearly did not believe that there was any one proto-type for the Septuagint of Origen. He saw no reason to believe that Christ or the apostles quoted the Septuagint (which was not produced until at least 150 years later).

Most "Septuagint scholars" reject the Kahle theory. It does not fit with their pre-conceived notions about the Septuagint or with their theological needs. They simply "dismiss it" but they can't refute it.

Fredrick Kenyon writes, "It must be admitted that Kahle makes a strong case." Dr. Kahle's theory fits with the record of Jerome.

X. THE OLD TESTAMENT IN GREEK—WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

Jewish people spread throughout the Greek kingdoms of the Mideast. As the Roman Empire spread through the Mideast, the Jewish dispersion increased.

Some Jews, known as Grecians or Hellenists, adopted the Greek life style as did much of the Roman Empire. Some of these Jews began to use Greek as their main language. They were represented in religious circles by the Sadducees.

Some entire Jewish communities began to adopt the Greek language, including the large Jewish community in Alexandria, Egypt. Some historians have estimated that one third of Alexandria was Jewish.

Many supporters of the "Christ used the Septuagint theory" teach that all the Jews used Greek as their main language and as their sacred language. This, they say, is

why Christ and the apostles used a Greek Old Testament. This statement _____

_____ . Outside Alexandria and a few other distant cities, the number of Jews who used Greek as their main language was very small.

The main language of the Jewish people was Aramaic. This language is related to Old Testament Hebrew. According to the unanimous testimony of the Jewish Misneh and the Jewish Targums, the language of the synagogues and the rabbis of Palestine was Aramaic. No Greek Old Testament could ever have gained any acceptance among the Jews of Palestine.

There was an Aramaic translation of the Old Testament in common use among the Jewish people. It was called the *Targum of Onkelos*. It was printed in 1517 by Cardinal Ximenes (who was also responsible for *The Complutensian Polyglot*).

Only in the far regions of the dispersion was there a demand for a Greek Old Testament. There were probably several attempts to translate parts of the Old Testament in Greek. According to "The Letter of Aristeeas," Philo, Josephus and a writer named Aristobolous, a Greek version of the first five books of the Old Testament was translated in Alexandria. Alexandria was one of the few places where a demand for a Greek Old Testament might have taken place. These authors clearly maintain that this version closely matched the Hebrew of the first five books of the Bible. The translation currently known as the Septuagint does not match the Hebrew closely at all. The scraps of the John Rylands' manuscript apparently come from _____

Someone invented the legend of the 72 elders in order to give credibility to a Greek translation, possibly one from Alexandria. Philo (who some believe invented the legend) and Josephus promoted this legend. Eventually someone expanded the story to refer to the whole Old Testament. Whenever someone used a Greek translation of part of the Old Testament, they called it the Septuagint to try and connect it to the legend of the _____.

Some early Christian leaders fell for this myth. Greek translations of the whole Old Testament began to appear in the Mideast. Around 140 A.D., a Greek translation was produced by Aquila. According to Jerome, he studied under the famed Rabbi Akiba from A.D. 95 until A.D. 135. This translation, made after the New Testament, purposely obscures the Old Testament prophecies about Christ that are fulfilled in the New Testament. Because of this, it found some acceptance among the Jews. Of course, it did not contain the Apocrypha - if it had it would never have been accepted by the Jews. Some writers have called Aquila's translation "the Septuagint" or "a Septuagint." There are no existing copies of this text.

Theodotian (around 180 A.D.) presented a Greek translation of the Old Testament. He was an "Ebionite" Christian—a heretical sect that denied the deity of Christ.

Mohammed's wife was an "Ebionite" Christian. She persuaded him that the "spirits" who were speaking to him were not really demons but angels.

Theodotian claimed to be correcting the original Septuagint. (How do you correct an inspired translation?) He also obscures many Old Testament prophecies about Christ. Since he was writing for a heretical Christian audience and not a Jewish one, he included some of the Apocrypha. His work was also called "a Septuagint" or "the Septuagint." A third translator, Symmachus, was also an Ebionite. He produced a Greek translation around 211 A.D. He did not include any of the Apocrypha. His work was also called "a Septuagint" or "the Septuagint."

Origen worked on "restoring" the Septuagint between 220-240 A.D. He claimed that there were as many different Greek translations as there were manuscripts. As he worked on his restoration, he had the translations of Aquila, Theodotian and Symmachus in front of him. He also claimed to have two other Greek manuscripts that he found in a jar and at least two "corrupted" copies of the true Septuagint.

Of course, Origen had the New Testament. He wrote commentaries on every book of the New Testament. He collated these Greek manuscripts and created his own version of the Septuagint. As the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* declares. "It was Origen who claimed to be able to give the church _____." (ISBE, p. 2276)

Origen clearly believed that the Old Testament prophecies referred to Christ. He worked hard at making the Old Testament match the New Testament - even when it didn't.

His Septuagint is what people call the Septuagint today. There is no copy of a Septuagint from Alexandria to compare with his copy. There is no way to know how much of Origen's Septuagint he simply invented.

Some writers have said that to declare Origen's Septuagint to be the document called the Septuagint today is simply "King James propaganda." "Scholars" like Ira Price, H.S. Miller, Frederick Kenyon and Gleason Archer are clearly not "King James fanatics." They all recognize that the current document called the Septuagint is the work of Origen. This is simply history. The *New Schaff - Herzog Encyclopedia* refers to Origen's Septuagint as "the so called Septuagint." (Vol. II, p. 116) *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, (Vol. 5, p. 63) states that the text of the Septuagint is, "contained in a few early, _____, manuscripts. The best known of these are the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus both dating from the 4th century and the Codex Alexandrinus from the 5th century." All of these early texts are Origen's Septuagint.

Smith's Bible Dictionary (p. 432) states about the Septuagint, "moreover it has come down to us in a state of great corruption, which renders it difficult to ascertain what the first translators wrote."

Francis Turretin writes:

"Finally, who can assure us that the seventy faithfully followed their Hebrew text and that the Greek text (which we now read) is the very same with that which the seventy wrote." *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, p. 119, 1696.

He also wrote:

"We have only its ruins and wreck, so that it can hardly be called the version of the Septuagint. . ." (p. 128)

In the fourth century, Jerome complained that the only editions of the Septuagint available were those of Origen's redaction of the Septuagint. He also claimed that

When writers like Irenaeus and Justin Martyr (who wrote before Origen) refer to the Septuagint, we have no idea what Greek version they were referring to. It doesn't exist today.

Origen's Septuagint was made popular by Eusebius. As a result... "evidence of Septuagint readings prior to the time of Origen have been confused or lost." (Ira Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, p. 79)

When "scholars" discuss the Septuagint today they discuss a translation produced after the New Testament by a famous commentator on the New Testament.

XI. THE EVIDENCE THAT CHRIST DID NOT USE ANY VERSION OF THE SEPTUAGINT

A. Law, Prophets and Psalms.

Christ continually refers to the Hebrew division of the Old Testament—The Law, Prophets and Psalms (see Matt. 7:12, 11:13, 22:40; and Luke 24:27, 44 for example). No known version of the Septuagint has any such division. Origen's Septuagint has the Old Testament in an entirely different order with the books of the Apocrypha interspersed among them. Christ took it for granted that His hearers used an Old Testament with the historic 3—old division found in the Hebrew Bible.

B. Proverbs 30:5-6.

The testimony of Proverbs 30:56 is clear. *Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* Proverbs 3:5-6 clearly condemns adding or subtracting from the words of the Hebrew Scriptures. Even the strongest defenders of the Septuagint admit that many words are added that are not

found in the Hebrew Scriptures (thus their claims against verbal inspiration). Origen may have been comfortable violating Proverbs 30:5-6 but Christ wouldn't have been.

If he had violated Proverbs 30:5-6, _____
_____.

XII. READING IN THE SYNAGOGUE

Jesus frequently read the Scriptures and preached from them in the Jewish Synagogues (see Luke 4 for example). Hebrew was the language of the Synagogue and Christ was clearly using a Hebrew Bible when preaching there. No copy of any Greek Old Testament has ever been found in a Jewish Synagogue.

XIII. THE COMMON PEOPLE HEARD HIM GLADLY

Jesus' public preaching and teaching drew great crowds of the common people. If he had preached in Greek he could never have drawn such an audience. Many Jewish people learned Greek for use in trade and dealing with the Roman Empire but they never accepted it for communication among themselves or in sacred matters.

The Hellenists (Grecians) who favored Greek were a small group often distant from the majority of the people. If Jesus had preached in Greek both the Pharisees and the Zealots would have used that against Him and the crowds would never have flocked to Him. He undoubtedly preached in Aramaic (the daily language of the Jews - closely related to Hebrew) and read the Scriptures from Hebrew. The Synagogues of Palestine refused to use the Greek and considered the Hebrew sacred. (see H.S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, p. 224)

The Hebrew Misneh makes it clear that this was expected from all Jewish teachers.

XIV. IS DISOBEDIENCE THE WAY TO GET AN HONORABLE TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURE?

If the story told in "The Letter of Aristeas" had any truth in it at all, it would involve activities in disobedience to Scripture. The Scripture was clear that the holy writings were to be handled only by Levites-Deut. 17:18, 31:25-26. The scribes involved in the Aristeas's story would be acting in disobedience to Scripture.

Furthermore, God had told the Israelites to stay out of Egypt - see Jeremiah 42:13-22 and 44:25-26. He condemned all those who returned to Egypt and promised to judge them.

Would Christ have put His stamp of approval on such disobedience?

XV. THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE APOCRYPHA

The Greek translation of the Old Testament currently known as the Septuagint (Origen's Septuagint) contains the books of the Apocrypha.

No Hebrew Bible ever contained the books of the Apocrypha. No Jewish council ever endorsed these books and at least one Jewish council specifically rejected them (Council of Jamnia A.D. 90).

No Jewish teacher or rabbi ever endorsed any book of the Apocrypha. One of the main reasons for rejecting them is because they were written in Greek. They did not believe that any sacred writings could ever be in Greek. Jewish leaders would also use this same argument against the books of the New Testament.

It is unthinkable to believe that the Jews in Palestine used a Greek Old Testament containing the rejected books of the Apocrypha. It is against all the evidence of history to think that they used a Greek Old Testament at all.

XVI. WHY DON'T NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES MATCH THE OLD TESTAMENT WORD FOR WORD?

"Well they had to be quoting something—it must be the Septuagint." This is the argument of advocates of the "Christ used the Septuagint theory." So what were the New Testament writers and Christ quoting?

There are 268 references to "as it is written" in the New Testament. Few match the exact wording of the Hebrew Old Testament passages they refer to. Eighty-eight match (or are matched by) Origen's Septuagint. Most of the other 180 don't match _____

Some have suggested that perhaps an Aramaic translation of the Old Testament or a Chaldean paraphrase is being quoted but this is unlikely.

Actually the explanation is simple and has been known for a long time. The Greek phrase "as it is written" is a common one in ancient Greek writings. It is never an indication of an exact quote—in the New Testament or anywhere else. Frederick Spitta wrote a century ago, "According to the unvarying practice in the New Testament, the citation formula 'as it is written' is _____ the introductory clause but rather always follows a report of something seen as the fulfillment of a prophetic word." The phrase implies not a quotation but a reference to a fulfillment of a prediction or a prophecy. For example, see the way the phrase, "as it is written," is used in the writings of Justin Martyr.

These passages are simply not quotes at all—they are allusions to Old Testament prophecies. These are Holy Spirit inspired allusions—they are not quotations at all. This was clear to the Reformed theologians and many of the old Church of England

writers. A little bit of research gives a clear explanation. The critics of the King James position would be well served to read more widely.

XVII. ORIGEN' S SEPTUAGINT COPIES THE NEW TESTAMENT

Many more examples could be shown. Origen's Septuagint adds nine names to Genesis 46:20 to make it add up to the 75 mentioned in Acts 7:14. Origen's Septuagint often changes the Old Testament to match the New Testament. For instance the Old Testament Hebrew is ignored and the Greek Old Testament is made to match the Greek New Testament.

Philo, Aristeas and Josephus refer to a Greek Old Testament that matches the Hebrew Old Testament. Origen provides a Greek Old Testament _____ in many places with the New Testament.

This should not come as a surprise. Origen produced his Greek Old Testament 150 years after the last book of the New Testament was given. As a noted commentator on all of the books of the New Testament, he was very familiar with the New Testament.

It is not a surprise _____
_____.
The New Testament came _____.

XVIII. WHAT ABOUT THE KING JAMES TRANSLATORS?

Advocates of the “Christ used the Septuagint” refer to the fact that some of the King James Bible translators believed this theory. This is true.

However, no one suggests that the King James translators were infallible in their understanding of church history. If they had been, they would have left the Church of England and joined the Baptist churches of their time.

It is interesting that many who believe that the King James translators can be corrected by every college student with two years of Greek, suddenly find them authoritative when they speak about church history. Their expertise was in the Greek, Hebrew and Latin languages, not in church history.

Rev. Prabhudas Koshy, of the Far Eastern Bible College sums this issue up well:

"The claim that Jesus and the New Testament writers always used the Septuagint to quote from the Old Testament is without biblical evidence. It has been said that in the New Testament there are about 263 direct quotations from the Old. However, many of these Old Testament quotations in the New are significantly different from the Septuagint. If Jesus and the

Apostles relied on the Septuagint for all their Old Testament quotations, such a difference would not have resulted.

There was no need for Jesus and the New Testament writers to rely on the Septuagint to quote the Old Testament, Jesus Himself was the Author of the Holy Scriptures. He could quote Hebrew Scriptures and translate them infallibly into Greek. As far as the Apostles were concerned, the Holy Spirit was their Chief Aide who supervised their writing of the Scriptures. There is nothing against them citing the Old Testament and translating the words into Greek themselves. Let us be mindful that both Testaments were inspired of the Holy Spirit; and that the Spirit was their infallible Author.

The New Testament's translations and interpretations of the Old Testament are not taken from any corrupt human work. Whatever the New Testament says about the Old Testament, whether it is a translation into Greek or an interpretation, it must be viewed as the infallible and inerrant work of the Holy Spirit. Every word of the New Testament, including quotations, interpretations and applications of the Old Testament, is not from any corrupt human translation but from the Holy Spirit Himself. As such it is highly unlikely that Jesus and the New Testament writers quoted from the corrupt Septuagint as some allege.

Moreover, Jesus made _____
_____ Septuagint. Neither did He assert that His quotations were taken from the Septuagint, nor mention the Septuagint. However, He did speak about the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. In Matthew 5:18, He referred to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament when He said, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." The *jot* (or *yodh*) is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, and the *tittle* is a portion of a letter that distinguishes two similarly written letters. Here Jesus spoke authoritatively about the accuracy of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. Jesus also declared His commitment to every letter of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament (Matt. 5:17-18). It is impossible to think that Jesus who affirmed His absolute commitment to every letter of the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament would quote or endorse its corrupt translation. If Jesus used the Greek Septuagint, His scriptures would have not contained the jots and the tittles. He obviously used the Hebrew Scriptures and not the corrupt Greek version!"

XIX. CONCLUSION

According to Dewey Beagle, only in recent years (he was writing in 1960) have "scholars" begun to value the Septuagint again. (*God's Word Into English*, p. 44) Could it be that the Biblical and textual "scholars" from the 1500s to the 1900s were right after all?

The Scripture offers many warnings about being careful what we believe.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Colossians 2:8.

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