

*An Analysis of Habakkuk 2:1-4 In Conjunction  
With Romans 1:16-17:  
The Application For Our Salvation And Daily Living In Jesus Christ*

*Introduction*

One of the most powerful statements in Scripture is Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous *man* shall live by faith.’” However, as we read this passage in the Greek New Testament, when we go to the Hebrew Old Testament, we realize that the HOT quote is worded a bit differently from Paul’s GNT quote: “Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4). In the GNT Paul simply says, “But the righteous shall live by faith,” whereas Habakkuk 2:4 in the HOT states, “but the righteous will live by his faith.” Why did Paul not quote the passage in the Greek exactly as it is written in the Hebrew? And in addition, what does the phrase, in Romans 1:17 mean, “For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith”? These two questions are very important, as they affect every aspect of our lives as believers in Jesus Christ, and we will attempt to answer them in our discussion which follows

*Influence and Analysis of the Septuagint*

One very important aspect of Old Testament quotes in the New Testament by Paul is that he predominantly took his quotes from the Greek Septuagint (over fifty times in Romans alone<sup>1</sup>), which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. In the life of the early Church (ca. 50 AD – 450 AD), the LXX was the primary source for reading and quoting the Old Testament, considering it the “inspired Word of God,”<sup>2</sup> but Origen (185-254) emphasized in His Hexapla (his translation of the Old Testament in six versions done between 230-245 AD – the Hebrew text, a Hebrew transliteration in Greek, a revised translation of the LXX, and three other alternate Greek translations of the Hebrew text<sup>3</sup>) “that the LXX is only a *translation* that can never exceed the Hebrew original in dignity, but must, rather, always succeed it.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gleason L. Archer and Gregory Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005), xx-xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Richard R. Ottley, *A Handbook to the Septuagint* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1920), 36-38.

<sup>3</sup> Paul D. Wegner, *A Student’s Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods, and Results* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 192-193.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Hengel, Roland Deines, and Robert Hanhart, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon*, trans. Mark E. Biddle (London: T & T Clark International, 2002), 36.

The history of the LXX goes back to the *Letter of Aristeas*, which is thought to have been written as early as the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC to as late as sometime in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD,<sup>5</sup> and in it is a detailed description of how it came to be written. The following is a brief summary of the letter:

The so-called Letter of Aristeas is a primary source for understanding the Septuagint, the version of the Jewish Scriptures in Greek. It purports to describe how the Jewish Law was translated from Hebrew into Greek by seventy-two Jews sent to Alexandria for this purpose. The author, Aristeas, writes to his brother Philocrates about this mission. Presumably, Aristeas, who was a Jew from Alexandria, participated in the mission.

The contents are briefly as follows: The Egyptian king Ptolemy II (285–247 B.C.) wants Demetrius of Phalerum, his librarian, to collect all the books in the world for the library at Alexandria. Demetrius thinks that such a collection should include a copy of the Jewish Law in a Greek translation, and so he orders a letter to be written to the high priest at Jerusalem.

In a digression (vss. 12–27), Aristeas successfully petitions the king for the release of those Jews forcibly deported to Egypt by his father, King Ptolemy, son of Lagos. The relevant royal decree is quoted.

Returning to the main theme, Aristeas quotes the letter which Demetrius, the librarian, is instructed to send to the high priest (vss. 28–34). It suggests that the translation be made by six suitable members from each of the twelve tribes (vss. 35–40). The suggestion is accepted, and the names of the translators are given (vss. 47–50). Gifts are sent from the king to the high priest (vss. 51–82). Aristeas himself is mentioned as one of the ambassadors (vs. 43).

A description of Palestine follows, including the Temple and the high priest's vestments (vss. 83–120), but the account of the journey, though promised, is not given. The qualifications and virtues of the translators are given and extolled (vss. 121–27).

Then there is a further digression on the Law in Judaism (vss. 128–171). The arrival of the translators in Alexandria and their welcome are described; a royal banquet is prepared (vss. 172–186).

Even the author apologizes for the length of the next section, which is about a third of Aristeas (vss. 187–294). He describes the questions put by the king during the seven days of the banquet to each of the translators in turn, and their replies.

Finally the translators are conducted to their well-furnished quarters by Demetrius, and the work begins. Drafts of the translation are made, and the final version is completed in exactly seventy-two days (vss. 301–7).

The version is read to the Jewish community; Demetrius is asked to complete the project by arranging for the translation of the rest of the Law, and steps are taken, by pronouncing a curse on any who should change it in any way, to ensure that this is established as the authorized and official Greek translation (vss. 308–11).

The king shares in the rejoicing at the completion of the initial task, the sacred character of the Law is emphasized, and Demetrius receives instructions to guard the books with special care (vss. 312–17).

Further compliments and gifts are given, and the translators depart for home with a guard of honor, a letter, and further gifts to Eleazar (vss. 318–21).

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<sup>5</sup> James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 2, Letter of Aristeas*, by R. J. H. Shutt (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985), 8.

A brief epilogue addressed to Philocrates, recalling his interest in such projects, brings Aristeas to a close.<sup>6</sup>

However, it was not until Jerome translated the Hebrew text into Latin (392-405<sup>7</sup>) that a serious challenge to the LXX as the primary source for Old Testament studies began to occur. On the other hand, with reference to Jerome's translation of the Hebrew Apocryphal book of Tobit into Latin, Jerome did not make an issue of the Latin translation of the Hebrew as superior to the Greek of the LXX, as Hengel points out:

The fact that Pope Damasus (366-384<sup>8</sup>) officially accepted Jerome's translation may be characterized as a minor miracle. Augustine still defended the LXX against Jerome's *Hebraitas*. Jerome himself, who was not only a great and combative scholar but also a smooth diplomat, largely abandoned any effort to defend the Hebrew original in the Apocrypha question. In the prologue to Tobit he writes: 'Sed melius esse iudicans Pharisaeorum displicere iudicio et episcoporum iussionibus deservire ("It is better to be subjected to the judgment of the Pharisees than to displease the judgment and orders of the Bishops" – *my translation*).'<sup>9</sup>

This last phrase of Jerome may be aimed at Augustine and others who respected Jerome, but were not very pleased with his Latin translation of the Hebrew. The reason for that is because in their mind, the LXX was the preferred, inspired translation over against the Hebrew as can be seen by the following discourse of Augustine (354-430) with regard to the presentation given in the *Letter f Aristeas* concerning the writing of the LXX:

Finally, let our authors, among whom the canon of the sacred books is fixed and bounded, be far from disagreeing in any respect. It is not without good reason, then, that not merely a few people prating in the schools and gymnasia in captious disputations, but so many and great people, both learned and unlearned, in countries and cities, have believed that God spoke to them or by them, *i.e.* the canonical writers, when they wrote these books. . . .

One of the Ptolemies (Ptolemy I, Soter [305-285 BC<sup>10</sup>] – *my note*), kings of Egypt, desired to know and have these sacred books. . . . But another Ptolemy, called Philadelphus (Ptolemy II [283-246 BC<sup>11</sup>] – Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II had a coregent of two years – *my note*), who succeeded him, permitted all whom he had brought under the yoke to return free; and, more than that, sent kingly gifts to the temple of God, and begged Eleazar, who was the high priest, to give him the Scriptures, which he had heard by report were truly divine, and therefore greatly desired to have in that most noble

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>7</sup> John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow, eds., *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*, "Latin Versions of the Hebrew Bible," by Julio C. Trebolle-Barrera (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), 876.

<sup>8</sup> W. A. Jurgens, ed. & trans., *The Faith of the Early Fathers, Vol. 1* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1979), 402.

<sup>9</sup> Hengel, Deines, and Hanhart, 49-50.

<sup>10</sup> H. W. Hoerner, *Ptolemy*, in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol.3*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986; reprint, 1992), 1048.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 1049.

library he had made. When the high priest had sent them to him in Hebrew, he afterwards demanded interpreters of him, and there were given him seventy-two, out of each of the twelve tribes six men, most learned in both languages, to wit, the Hebrew and Greek and their translation is now by custom called the Septuagint. It is reported, indeed, that there was an agreement in their words so wonderful, stupendous, and plainly divine, that when they had sat at this work, each one apart (for so it pleased Ptolemy to test their fidelity), they differed from each other in no word which had the same meaning and force, or, in the order of the words; but, as if the translators had been one, so what all had translated was one, because in very deed the one Spirit had been in them all. And they received so wonderful a gift of God, in order that the authority of these Scriptures might be commended not as human but divine, as indeed it was, for the benefit of the nations who should at some time believe, as we now see them doing.

For while there were other interpreters who translated these sacred oracles out of the Hebrew tongue into Greek, as Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, and also that translation which, as the name of the author is unknown, is quoted as the fifth edition, yet the Church has received this Septuagint translation just as if it were the only one; and it has been used by the Greek Christian people, most of whom are not aware that there is any other. From this translation there has also been made a translation in the Latin tongue, which the Latin churches use. Our times, however, have enjoyed the advantage of the presbyter Jerome, a man most learned, and skilled in all three languages, who translated these same Scriptures into the Latin speech, not from the Greek, but from the Hebrew. But although the Jews acknowledge this very learned labor of his to be faithful, while they contend that the Septuagint translators have erred in many places, still the churches of Christ judge that no one should be preferred to the authority of so many men, chosen for this very great work by Eleazar, who was then high priest; for even if there had not appeared in them one spirit, without doubt divine, and the seventy learned men had, after the manner of men, compared together the words of their translation, that what pleased them all might stand, no single translator ought to be preferred to them; but since so great a sign of divinity has appeared in them, certainly, if any other translator, of their Scriptures from the Hebrew into any other tongue is faithful, in that case he agrees with these seventy translators, and if he is not found to agree with them, then we ought to believe that the prophetic gift is with them. For the same Spirit who was in the prophets when they spoke these things was also in the seventy men when they translated them, so that assuredly they could also say something else, just as if the prophet himself had said both, because it would be the same Spirit who said both; and could say the same thing differently, so that, although the words were not the same, yet the same meaning should shine forth to those of good understanding; and could omit or add something, so that even by this it might be shown that there was in that work not human bondage, which the translator owed to the words, but rather divine power, which filled and ruled the mind of the translator. Some, however, have thought that the Greek copies of the Septuagint version should be emended from the Hebrew copies; yet they did not dare to take away what the Hebrew lacked and the Septuagint had, but only added what was found in the Hebrew copies and was lacking in the Septuagint, and noted them by placing at the beginning of the verses certain marks in the form of stars which they call asterisks. And those things which the Hebrew copies have not, but the Septuagint have, they have in like manner marked at the beginning of the verses by horizontal spit-shaped marks like those by which we denote ounces; and many copies having these marks are circulated even in Latin. But we cannot, without inspecting both kinds of copies, find out those things which are neither omitted nor added, but expressed differently, whether they yield another meaning not in itself unsuitable, or can be shown to explain the same meaning in another way. If, then, as it behoves us, we behold nothing else in these Scriptures than

what the Spirit of God has spoken through men, if anything is in the Hebrew copies and is not in the version of the Seventy, the Spirit of God did not choose to say it through them, but only through the prophets. But whatever is in the Septuagint and not in the Hebrew copies, the same Spirit chose rather to say through the latter, thus showing that both were prophets. For in that manner He spoke as He chose, some things through Isaiah, some through Jeremiah, some through several prophets, or else the same thing through this prophet and through that. Further, whatever is found in both editions, that one and the same Spirit willed to say through both, but so as that the former preceded in prophesying, and the latter followed in prophetically interpreting them; because, as the one Spirit of peace was in the former when they spoke true and concordant words, so the selfsame one Spirit hath appeared in the latter, when, without mutual conference they yet interpreted all things as if with one mouth.<sup>12</sup>

With reference to the *Letter of Areteas*, there has developed over the past four hundred years a reticence concerning the acceptance of the total historicity of the *Letter*, and over the past one hundred years, that reticence has turned into a high degree of skepticism so that many see it as merely “legendary” in nature.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, as Richard Otteley points out, there is foundational truth in the *Letter*:

On the other hand, it is recognized that a foundation of truth underlies the tale, rejecting, of course, the embellishments of Epiphanius (315-403 AD<sup>14</sup> – *my note*), and any anachronisms proved to be such. Jew though the real author be, he draws skilfully upon non-Jewish sources for the geography of Palestine, and the wisdom displayed in the king’s questions to the elders, and their answers; while his knowledge of the Alexandrian city and court seems to be exact and trustworthy. We may believe, then, without hesitation, that the Law—the Pentateuch—with which alone Aristeas is concerned, was translated at Alexandria, probably within fifty years of the date indicated in the ‘Letter.’ The translation of the remaining books followed, bit by bit, during the next century and a half.<sup>15</sup>

There is today, therefore, a plethora of criticism aimed at the *Letter of Areteas*, asserting that historically it is fraudulent in a number of aspects. As with any historical document, there is objective, legitimate criticism, but then there is also biased, not fully accurate criticism, and thus, with reference to the latter, I want to look at three aspects of criticism leveled at the *Letter of Aristeas* by Timothy Lim. However, this is not only for the purpose of evaluating the *Letter*, but in all endeavors we undertake, we need to be critical readers, listeners, and evaluators of the criticism others level at Scripture, or whatever we are reading or researching, because, as just stated, certain criticisms may be fully objective and legitimate, while others may be quite biased and highly subjective in nature. Thus, due to the time frame of our meeting, as well as the major focus of this paper, we will only deal with these three criticisms of Lim, which are a fair

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<sup>12</sup> Philip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Vol. 2, The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dodds (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 18:41, 42, 43: 384-386.

<sup>13</sup> Natalio Fernandez Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2000), 40.

<sup>14</sup> Jurgens, vol. 2, 67.

<sup>15</sup> Otteley, 34.

representation of the overall criticism of the *Letter*, but once again, please know that as just stated, there is a bevy of criticism beyond Lim's that one should take into consideration when doing serious research on the origin of the LXX:

- 1) "There are, however, slips and inaccuracies that betray a later date of composition. In §182, when Nicanor instructs Dorotheus to make special provisions of food, drink, and recliners for the benefit of the visiting translators, the narrator adds: 'For such was the arrangement instituted by the king, which you may observe in use *even now*' (ἔτι καὶ νῦν). The perspective is that of an author who was removed in time from the events and needed to explain the conventions of a contemporary practice to the reader."<sup>16</sup> Now while Lim is exactly correct with regard to the reading of the Greek text,<sup>17</sup> the Greek phrase doesn't have to indicate an elongated period of time. For example, in New Testament Greek, there is what is called an Epistolary Aorist, wherein a writer of a Greek letter would place himself in the same time frame of his readers when making a statement, although what he was saying was actually a present or future occurrence with him at the time of his writing, and this is seen in the following example with Paul: "But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. <sup>22</sup> And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts" (Ephesians 6:21-22). In other words, Tychicus was there with Paul when he was writing this epistle, but Paul was writing the letter in view of the people who would be reading the letter after Tychichus delivered it to them. Thus, by using this Greek prepositional phrase in the Letter of sentence 182, ἔτι καὶ νῦν (*eti kai nun* – until now), the writer is emphasizing that at the time of his writing this letter, "Dorotheus" was simply indicating that the King's previous command holds true now, as well as in the past in previous, similar situations for special guests. In addition, the whole phrase, ἃ μὲν ἔτι καὶ νῦν ὁρᾶς (*ha men eti kai nun horas*) may be translated as follows: "which on the other hand, still also now you see," implying that the procedures of the King have been consistent throughout his reign and do not vary in this type of outreach to such special guests.
- 2) "Or again, in §28, when the narrator adds an explanatory gloss to the royal practice of requiring a written submission of the proposed acquisition of the Jewish books, he nostalgically reminisces of a bygone age: 'These kings used to administer all their business through decrees and with great precaution; nothing was done negligently or casually.' The use of the past tense, 'used to administer,' is incompatible with a contemporary author. Moreover, the plural 'kings' is inaccurate, given that there was only one other king before Philadelphus (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 12:10)."<sup>18</sup> The Greek word that Lim translates as "used to administer" is διωκέιτο (*diōkeito*), which is an imperfect form of the verb, and J. H. Shutt gives the following translation of this

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<sup>16</sup> Timothy Lim, *The Formation of the Jewish Canon* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2013), 79.

<sup>17</sup> <http://ocp.tyndale.ca/letter-of-aristea#182-182>

<sup>18</sup> Lim, *Ibid.*

very same phrase and verb: “All measures **were taken** (*my underlining and embolden for identification*) by these kings by means of edicts and in complete safety, with no trace of negligence or carelessness.”<sup>19</sup> The imperfect form of the verb in both classical and biblical Greek indicates continuous action in past time as the two following quotes indicate respectively:

The imperfect tense of the indicative mood shows an action that was occurring at some time in the past. As its name suggests, the imperfect tense has imperfective aspect; i.e., the action is perceived as a process that continued or was repeated over time. In English this idea is most clearly expressed by *was/were* and *-ing* (e.g., “we were studying for years”), but it may also be represented by English’s simple past tense (“we studied for years”). Sometimes the context shows that the verb would be better translated as, e.g., “We were trying to study,” “We were starting to study,” or “We used to study.” While the present and future tenses may have either imperfective or aoristic aspect, the imperfect tense always has imperfective aspect.<sup>20</sup>

The Greek imperfect tense is both limited and versatile in its usage. It is limited in that it only occurs in the indicative mood (which is the mood of something actual occurring – *my note*), but in that mood it has some interesting nuances of meaning. Basically, the imperfect expresses linear action (i.e., action that is ongoing and continuous – *my note*) in past time. That action may be repetitive, prolonged or just beginning. Sometimes, however, the imperfect expresses repeated *attempts*.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, when Lim says that “The use of the past tense, ‘used to administer,’ is incompatible with a contemporary author,” he either does not know Greek that well (which I strongly doubt), or he is simply repeating what he read in the note on verse 28 of Thackeray’s translation of the *Letter of Aristeas*, where Thackeray states: “This is one of several indications in the letter that the writer lived at a later age than that which he is describing.”<sup>22</sup> The truth of the matter is that there is no problem with someone using the imperfect tense to describe something that was occurring repeatedly in one’s recent past, as if I would say, “I was working out/worked out (imperfect tense – ongoing and continuous action in the past) at the gym while I was visiting my daughter for Christmas in Seattle (and I am referring to this past Christmas, one month ago, or I could be referring to the past eight years I have done the same thing whenever we visit her),” or, “I was working out/worked out (imperfect tense of ongoing and continuous action in the past) at Gold’s Gym in Murrieta (and I did that last week, as well as over the past 17 years).” On the other hand, if I wanted to emphasize a longer period of time in the past in which I did something continuously, I could also use the imperfect and say, “I was playing/played/**used to play** football at Mississippi State,” and that would unequivocally be

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<sup>19</sup> Charlesworth, 14.

<sup>20</sup> Anne H. Groton, *From Alpha to Omega: A Beginning Course in Classical Greek*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing/R. Mullins Company, 2013), 57.

<sup>21</sup> William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek: Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 176.

<sup>22</sup> H. St. J. Thackeray, *The Letter of Aristeas Translated Into English With An Introduction And Notes* (London: MacMillan and CO., Limited, 1904), 11.

referring to almost half a century ago, but for someone to know that, they would have to clearly know me and the real history of my life. Thus, for Thackeray to translate διωκέιτο (*diōkeito*) as “used to administer,” implying a long distance of time separating the writer from the time when the action he is referring to occurred, is not an unbiased translation, but rather an interpolation, whereby Thackeray is inserting his personal bias regarding just when he believes the writer actually wrote the *Letter*. On the other hand, Shutt is giving a very accurate and unbiased translation of “were taken” for the verb διωκέιτο (*diōkeito*), which can imply a very recent time. In addition, when the phrase in Greek is used, “These kings,” that is absolutely suitable since Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II were father and son respectively, and not only that, but they had a coregent reign of sorts for two years just before Ptolemy I died (Ptolemy I actually relinquished rule to his son for those last two years before his death), so there is no problem whatsoever for the writer to refer to “These kings,” as the “kings” he could very well have been referring to were Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II.

- 3) “The most glaring of such blunders is the naming of the librarian as Demetrius of Phalerum (ca. 350–297 BCE). He never held the office in the library of Alexandria, and he enjoyed the patronage of Ptolemy Soter and not of his son Philadelphus. In fact, in the rivalry for succession, Demetrius supported his half-brother Ptolemy Ceraunus against Philadelphus. Upon his accession, Philadelphus banished the ‘Peripatetic’ scholar.”<sup>23</sup> With regard to Lim’s claim, one might indeed legitimately question how much of an involvement Demetrius actually had with Philadelphus, but to say that Demetrius “never held the office in the library of Alexandria” flies in the face of actual facts, as can be seen in the following quote from Will Durant in his *The Story of Civilization: The Life of Greece*:

While other inheritors of Alexander’s realm spent half their lives in way, and dreamed of undivided sovereignty, Ptolemy (I Soter – *my note*) devoted himself to consolidating his position in an alien country, and to promoting Egyptian agriculture, commerce, and industry. . . . In his old age he found time to write astonishingly truthful commentaries on his campaigns, and to establish, about 290, the Museum and Library that were to make the fame of Alexandria. In 285, feeling his eighty-two years, he appointed his second son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, to the throne, yielded the government to him, and took his place as a subject in the young king’s court. Two years later he died.

. . . . Following and improving upon the example of his father, he invited to Alexandria as his guests famous poets, savants, critics, scientists, philosophers, and artists, and made his capital beautiful with architecture in the Greek style. During his long reign Alexandria became the literary and scientific capital of the Mediterranean, and Alesandrian literature flourished as it would never do again. . . .

He had so enlarged and lavishly financed the Museum and Library that later history named him as their founder. In 307 Demetrius of Phalerum, expelled from Athens, had taken refuge in Egypt. The years later we find him in the court of Ptolemy I. It was he, apparently, who suggested to Ptolemy Soter that the capital and the dynasty might be made illustrious by establishing a Museum – i.e., a House of Muses – i.e., of the arts and sciences – which would rival the universities of Athens. Inspired, probably, by Aristotle’s industry in collecting and classifying books, knowledge, animals, plants, and constitutions,

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<sup>23</sup> Lim, *Ibid*.



Demetrius appears to have recommended the erection of a group of buildings capable not only of sheltering a great collection of books, but also of housing scholars who would devote their lives to research. **The plan appealed to the first two Ptolemies** (*my underline and embolden emphasis*); funds were provided, and the new university slowly took form near the royal palaces. There was a general mess hall, where the scholars seem to have had their meals; there was an exedra, or lecture hall, a court, a cloister, a garden, an astronomical observatory, **and the great Library** (*my underline and embolden emphasis*).<sup>24</sup>

The point to be made by the above quote is that historical records seem to clearly indicate, totally apart from the *Letter of Aristeas*, that Demetrius was indeed integrally involved in the establishment of the Alexandrian Library, which began with Ptolemy I and reached its zenith with Ptolemy II. However, in addition to Durant clearly elucidating Demetrius' role in the establishment of the Alexandrian Library in contradistinction to Lim's assertion, Durant also illumines the motivating reasons for the beginning of the writing of the LXX:

The Jews (in Egypt – *my note*) did what they could to allay the resentment against their *amixia* – their social separation – and their success. Though they clung to their religion they spoke Greek, studied and wrote about Greek literature, and translated their sacred books and their histories into Greek. To acquaint the Greeks with the Jewish religious tradition, and to enable the Jew who knew no Hebrew to read his own scriptures, a group of Alexandrian Jewish scholars began, probably under Ptolemy II, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. The kings favored the undertaking in the hope that it would make the Jews of Egypt more independent of Jerusalem, and would lessen the flow of Jewish-Egyptian funds to Palestine. Legend (i.e., the account contained in the *Letter of Aristeas* – *my note*) told how Ptolemy Philadelphus, at the suggestion of Demetrius of Phalerum, invited some seventy Jewish scholars to come from Judea about 250 to translate the scriptures of their people; how the King had lodged each of them in a separate room on Pharos, and had kept them without intercommunication until each had made his own rendering of the Pentateuch; how all the seventy versions, when finished, agreed word for word, proving the divine inspiration of the text and of the translators; how the King rewarded the scholars with costly presents of gold; and how from these circumstances the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible came to be known as the *hermeneia kata tous hebdomekonta* – the *Interpretation according to the Seventy* – in Latin, *Interpretatio Septuaginta* (*sc. Seniorum*) – in a word, the “Septuagint.” Whatever the process of translation, the Pentateuch seems to have appeared in Greek before the close of the third century, and the Prophetic books in the second. This was the Bible used by Philo and St. Paul.<sup>25</sup>

Now while Durant does not believe the *Letter of Aristeas* is valid with reference to the account of how the LXX was actually translated, he does agree that the LXX's Pentateuch was translated sometime between 250-225 BC, and the remaining books sometime in the second century BC.

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<sup>24</sup> Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization: The Life of Greece*, Vol. 2 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939, renewed in 1966), 585-586.

<sup>25</sup> Durant, 594-595.

As we conclude this brief overview of the critical analysis of the origin of the LXX, what is of crucial importance for us to understand is that regardless of exactly how and when the translation of the LXX actually began, the absolute and unequivocal reality is that by the time of the Essenes in the Qumran Community near the Dead Sea (ca. 160 BC<sup>26</sup>), the LXX text was quoted as a source for their scriptural teaching;<sup>27</sup> Philo (ca. 20BC – 50AD<sup>28</sup>) makes a statement about the LXX translation affirming its “inspiration,” as does Augustine some four hundred years later;<sup>29</sup> and Josephus (37AD – 100AD<sup>30</sup>) goes into detail concerning the translation of the LXX,<sup>31</sup> which was obviously being used in both the Synagogues of his day, and especially in the newly found Christian Churches as has already been indicated in our opening paragraph. Thus, the LXX, as stated initially, was unquestionably considered to be the “inspired Word of God” by the early Church, which included the Apostles and others who were the authors of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. However, there was also another very important aspect to both the translation of the LXX and how it was used and quoted in the New Testament, and that has to do with a Jewish approach toward biblical exegesis called Midrash, which is clearly manifest in the Aramaic Targums, and which we also see in the LXX, as well as in the New Testament, which I believe may also include Paul’s quote and brief, exegetical analysis of Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17, that was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

#### *Midrash and Its Use in Ancient Jewish and Christian Writings*

Jacob Neusner gives an excellent definition and explanation of Midrash in the following quote:

The word “Midrash” refers to the processes of scriptural exegesis carried on by diverse groups of Jews **from the time of ancient Israel to nearly the present day** (*my underline and embolden emphasis*). Thus people say, “He produced a *Midrash* on the verse,” meaning, “an exegesis.” A more extreme usage produces, “Life is a *Midrash* on Scripture,” meaning that what happens in the everyday world imparts meaning or significance to biblical stories and admonitions. It is difficult to specify what the word “Midrash” in Hebrew expresses that the word “exegesis” in English does not. It follows that just how “exegesis” in English differs from “Midrash” in Hebrew is not self-evident. Nor do I know why the Hebrew will serve better than the more familiar English.

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<sup>26</sup> Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2009), 90-92.

<sup>27</sup> James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Volume 1: Scripture and the Scrolls*, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hebrew Scriptural Text,” by Eugene C. Ulrich (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 84-85.

<sup>28</sup> R. M. Wilson, *Philo Judaeus*, in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol.3*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986; reprint, 1992), 847.

<sup>29</sup> Philo, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, “The Life of Moses, 2:V-VII,” trans. C. D. Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1993), 493-494.

<sup>30</sup> H. Schreckenberg, *Josephus, Flavius*, in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol.2*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986; reprint, 1992), 1132-1133.

<sup>31</sup> Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Flavius Josephus, Volume III*, trans. William Whiston (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), *Ant.* 12:2, 149-163.

Some imagine that “Midrash” for Jewish exegetes generically differs from “Exegesis” for non-Jewish ones. Each term bears its own etymological sense. “Exegesis” means “leading out,” that is, drawing out the meaning intended by the author or found in the text. “Midrash” refers to what is searched out, e.g., by methodical research. The two terms refer to different aspects of the same process, that is, studying or re-searching the text to bring out its meaning. “Midrash” then can be said to refer to study or research, while “exegesis” speaks of the results of the search, the presentation of the meaning of the text. The two words then end up covering much of the same ground. “Midrash” stands for a perfectly respectable, rule-bound, rational, scholarly treatment of the text, as much as does “exegesis.” But the words intersect over such a broad area that we are hardly required to use a foreign word when a native one serves perfectly well.<sup>32</sup>

The following is a very brief example of a midrashic, interpretational analysis of Deuteronomy 1:1:

- A. “These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel in Transjordan, in the wilderness, that is to say in the Arabah, opposite Suph, between Paran on the one side and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab, on the other” (Dt. 1:1):
- B. [“These are the words that Moses spoke” (Dt. 1:1):] Did Moses prophesy only these alone? Did he not write the entire Torah?
- C. For it is said, “And Moses wrote this Torah” (Dt. 31:9).
- D. Why then does Scripture say, “These are the words that Moses spoke” (Dt. 1:1)?
- E. It teaches that [when Scripture speaks of the words that one spoke, it refers in particular to] the words of admonition.
- F. So it is said [by Moses], “But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked” (Dt. 32:15).<sup>33</sup>

As you can see, the above, midrashic, interpretive analysis of Deuteronomy 1:1 is quite similar to our exegetical analyses and comments in our own commentaries. Therefore, Paul, “a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee” (Philippians 3:5), was not only fully aware of midrashic, interpretive analysis of the Scripture, but was very much immersed in it as well. In Ephesians 4:8, we read: “Therefore it says, ‘When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And **He gave gifts to men** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*).’” The last phrase, “He gave gifts to men,” is taken from Psalm 68:18 (68:19 in MT, LXX, and Targum), which reads in Hebrew, “Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captive *Thy* captives; **Thou hast received gifts among men** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*), Even *among* the rebellious also, that the LORD God may dwell *there*.” The Hebrew verb for “received” is לָקַח (*lāqāḥ*), which means “to take, take from, carry away, procure, and receive.”<sup>34</sup> In addition, the LXX of Psalm 68:18 is in line with the Hebrew text, “Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, **thou hast received gifts for man** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*), yea, for *they were* rebellious, that thou mightest dwell among them,” and the Greek verb for “received” is λαμβάνω

<sup>32</sup> Jacob Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 224-225.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>34</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew And English Lexicon With An Appendix Containing The Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979), 542-543.

(*lambanō*), which means “to take in the hand, to receive, and to obtain.”<sup>35</sup> However, the Aramaic Targum of Psalm 68:18 reads as follows, “You ascended to the firmament, Moses the prophet, you took captive the captives, you taught the words of the Law, **you gave to them gifts to the sons of men** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*); and moreover the rebellious who seek to be converted, returning with repentance (to the Law), *then* the Shekinah of the glory of the LORD God dwells upon them (*my translation*).” The Aramaic verb for “gave” is **יָהַב** (*yēhab*), which means “to give.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, as we look at the above three passages, you can easily see that Paul took his quote from the Aramaic Targum of Psalm 68:18 (19), which means that Paul was not only aware of the midrashic, interpretive analysis of the Targums, but he used it himself, and I would say as stated above, as a Pharisee, Paul was very much immersed in midrashic interpretation of the Scripture. But when God transformed his life, this interpretive approach toward Scripture was inspired and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

Two of the most significant figures in Jewish, cultural and religious influence within the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC and AD were Rabbi Hillel (ca. 70/60 BC to 10/20 AD<sup>37</sup>) and Rabbi Shammai (ca. 50 BC – 30 AD<sup>38</sup>), and they were both of the sect of the Pharisees.<sup>39</sup> It is said that Hillel, “in opposition to his colleague, Shammai, generally advocated milder interpretations of the Halakah,”<sup>40</sup> and the Halakah “stands sometimes for the whole legal part of Jewish tradition, in contradistinction to the Haggadah, comprising thus the whole civil law and ritual law of rabbinical literature and extending also to all the usages, customs, ordinances, and decrees for which there is no authority in the Scriptures.”<sup>41</sup> And with regard to Hillel’s and Shammai’s influence on the Gospel and early Christianity, we see this divergence between the two manifest quite clearly in the matter of divorce:

Hillel’s exegesis was frequently opposed by Shammai (ca 50 B.C.–A.D. 30), a Judean who, like Hillel, gathered a school of disciples about himself that continued after his death. Hillel generally favored a freer interpretation of the biblical text than Shammai, who usually adhered to the letter of the law. The difference between the two schools is illustrated by the issue of divorce, which centered on the phrase “some indecency” (Heb. *’erwat dābār*, lit “nakedness of a thing”) in Dt. 24:1. The school of Shammai restricted

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<sup>35</sup> William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 465-466.

<sup>36</sup> Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary Of The Targumim, The Talmud Babli And Yerushalmi, And The Midrashic Literature* (Brooklyn: Traditional Press, Inc., 1903), 565.

<sup>37</sup> There is uncertainty about the dates of Hillel’s birth and date, but there is no uncertainty as to the overall affect of his influence on Judaism through his various midrashic commentaries, and as you read them, you also begin to see many similarities between his comments and certain emphases made by Jesus – W. Bacher, “Hillel,” in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 6, Isidore Singer, ed. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901-1906), 397; R. J. Way, “Hillel,” in *The International Bible Encyclopedia, Revised*, Vol. 2, ed. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986; reprint, 1992), 716.

<sup>38</sup> R. J. Way, “Hillel,” in *The International Bible Encyclopedia, Revised*, Vol. 2, ed. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986; reprint, 1992), 716.

<sup>39</sup> Frederick J. Murphy, *Early Judaism: The Exile to the Time of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 233-234.

<sup>40</sup> Bacher, “Hillel,” *Ibid.*, 398.

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Jacobs, “Halakah,” in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 6, Isidore Singer, ed. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901-1906), 163.

the meaning of illicit sexual conduct by focusing on *erwat* (“shamefulness,” “nakedness”), but the Hillelites emphasized *dābār* (“thing,” “matter”) and construed the phrase to mean “*any* indecent thing,” even as trivial as spoiling the husband’s food (TB *Gittin* 90a). This controversy lies behind the question of the Pharisees in Mt. 19:3 (cf. Mk. 10:2), “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife *for any cause*?” The restriction of divorce to the one cause of unchastity in Mt. 5:32; 19:3 reflects the stricter interpretation of the school of Shammai (SB, I, 312–320).<sup>42</sup>

On the other hand, Hillel is noted for emphasizing the “golden rule” in his teaching, which is in essence what Jesus and Paul also taught:

The saying of Hillel which introduces the collection of his maxims in the Mishnaic treatise *Abot* mentions Aaron as the great model to be imitated in his love of peace, in his love of man, and in his leading mankind to a knowledge of the Law (Ab. i. 12). In mentioning these characteristics, which the Haggadah then already ascribed to Moses’ brother, Hillel mentions his own most prominent virtues. Love of man was considered by Hillel as the kernel of the entire Jewish teaching. When a heathen who wished to become a Jew asked him for a summary of the Jewish religion in the most concise terms, Hillel said: “What is hateful to thee, do not unto thy fellow man: this is the whole Law; the rest is mere commentary” (Shab. 31a). With these words Hillel recognized as the fundamental principle of the Jewish moral law the Biblical precept of brotherly love (Lev. 19:18). **Almost the same thing was taught by Paul, a pupil of Gamaliel** (Acts 22:3 – *my note*), **the grandson of Hillel** (Gal. 5:14; comp. Rom. 13:8 – *my underline and embolden for emphasis*); and more broadly by Jesus when he declared the love of one’s neighbor to be the second great commandment beside the love of God, the first (Matt. 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27). It may be assumed without argument that Hillel’s answer to the proselyte, which is extant in a narrative in the Babylonian Talmud (comp. also Ab. R. N., recension B., cxxvi. [ed. Schechter, p. 53]), was generally known in Palestine, and that it was not without its effect on the founder of Christianity.

It has been remarked that Hillel did not, like Jesus, state the love of God to be the principal commandment of the Jewish teaching (see Delitzsch, “Jesus und Hillel,” p. 17); but it must not be forgotten that Jesus gave his answer to a scribe, whereas Hillel answered the question of a prospective proselyte, to whom it was necessary first of all to show how the teachings of Judaism are to be practised by him who wishes to accept them. That the love of God had also a central position in Hillel’s conception of religion needs not to be proved; this position had long been assigned to it in Judaism—since the Scripture passage in which this precept is joined immediately to the confession of the unity of God (Deut. 6:4 *et seq.*) had been made the principal portion of the daily prayer. Moreover, the Pharisaic scribes who approved of Jesus’ answer evidently belonged to Hillel’s school. Hillel seems to have connected the precept of brotherly love with the Biblical teaching of man’s likeness to God, on which account he calls the love of man “love of creatures” (“*oheb et ha-beriyot*”); and it is worthy of note that the term “creatures” for men was then already the common property of the language.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to the above connection with reference to the “golden rule” espoused by Hillel in Paul’s education and training as a Pharisee, and then in Paul’s actual ministry (Galatians 5:14 &

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<sup>42</sup> Way, *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Bacher, *Ibid.*

Romans 13:8), Louis Finklestein wrote an excellent article on “The Oldest Midrash,” which is about Deuteronomy 26:5-8,<sup>44</sup> and Finklestein dates the Midrash to the late third century BC.<sup>45</sup> As Finklestein proceeds through the history and transmission of this Midrash, he points out the phrase in Deuteronomy 26:8 that caused great controversy among Jewish Rabbis, and it is this that is underlined and emboldened, “and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and **with great terror** and with signs and wonders.” Finklestein points out that the Sadducees, who believed that God appeared in visible form, read it as, “with a great vision,” whereas the Pharisees, who did not believe that God appeared in a visible form, read it as, “with great terribleness.”<sup>46</sup> Finklestein then goes on to explain the variation in the wording in the Hebrew, whereby “vision” could replace “terribleness” (which explanation of the Hebrew I am not going to pursue because it is not fully relevant to our focus in this paper, but rather simply present what he says):

In fact, there can be little doubt that as Geiger has pointed out, the verse *ubemora’ gadol* which is translated “and with great terribleness,” was originally read *ubermar’eh gadol* “and with a great Vision.” Only the reading *ubermar’eh gadol* could justify the interpretation (in the Midrash – *my note*), “this refers to the visible manifestation of God.” And it is this reading (i.e., “with a great vision” – *my note*) which is reflected in the Septuagint, the Syriac, and most surprisingly of all, the Aramaic, versions (and indeed, he is absolutely correct – *my note*).<sup>47</sup>

And as I stated in my parenthetical comment, we are not going to get into a discussion about the distinction between “vision” and “terror,” but what is significant for us in our discussion is the notation he gives as a footnote about the above quoted paragraph, in which he quotes Rabbi Hillel:

Similar readings of *ubemora’* are found also in the Septuagint, Peshitta, and Targumim to Deut. 4:34, and Jer. 32:21. It is also found in Peshitta and Targumim to Deut. 34:12. The Vulgate which in all the passages cited follows the Massoretic readings, translates the phrase in Deut. 3:34, *horribiles visions*, combining both senses. Geiger’s view gains curious support from Sifre Deut. 161, Friedman 105b, Finklestein 212, which reads according to the best texts (Vatican Ms. **and commentary of R. Hillel** [*my underline and embolden for emphasis*]): “That he may learn to fear the Lord his God. This teaches us that the Vision leads to reading the Scripture; reading the Scripture leads to translation; translation leads to study of the Mishna; study of the Mishna leads to discussion; discussion leads to deeds; deeds lead to fear (of God).”<sup>48</sup>

First of all, the Mishna that Hillel is talking about is delineated below in the following quote:

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<sup>44</sup> Louis Finklestein, “The Oldest Midrash: Pre-Rabbinic Ideals and Teachings in the Passover Haggadah,” *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 31, 4 (October, 1938), 294.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 298-300.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

The Hebrew verb shanah ‘to repeat’ in its technical sense means to learn . . . or to teach . . . oral tradition by repeated recitation, in contrast to qara’, to study the Holy Scriptures. . . .

Mishnah therefore means study . . . as well as oral instruction . . . In this sense Mishnah comprises three branches of tradition: midrash as the interpretation of the text of Scripture; the halakho as the statutes formulated independently of Scripture; and finally the haggadot, i.e., all non-halakhic material. . . .

More specifically, Mishnah designates the entire religious law formulated until c. 200 (i.e., at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD when the Mishnah began to be codified in a systematic, written format – *my note*), but also the teaching of a teacher (Tannaite) active in this period as well as an individual proposition (-halakhah) or collections of such propositions . . . .<sup>49</sup>

In other words, the Mishnah was the oral Law, if you will, or the “tradition of the elders” that the Pharisees were referring to in Matthew 15:1-9,<sup>50</sup> and to which Jesus responded by saying that the “written Word of God” takes precedence over the “tradition of the elders,” or the oral law that was at that time the uncoded Mishnah:

Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." <sup>3</sup> And He answered and said to them, "And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? <sup>4</sup> "For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.' <sup>5</sup> "But you say, 'Whoever shall say to *his* father or mother, "Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given *to God*," <sup>6</sup> he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And *thus* you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition. <sup>7</sup> "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, <sup>8</sup> "This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. <sup>9</sup> 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'" (Matthew 15:1-9)

Therefore, what Rabbi Hillel was talking about was the systematic study of Scripture, coupled with the study of the mishnaic discussion by various Rabbis on the various issues of life, but what is of interest to us with reference to the influence Hillel had on Paul through Gamaliel is the progression presented by Hillel toward the goal of walking in “the fear of God”: “*That he may learn to fear the Lord his God.* This teaches us that the Vision leads to (1) reading the Scripture; (2) reading the Scripture leads to translation; (3) translation leads to study of the Mishna; (4) study of the Mishna leads to discussion; (5) discussion leads to deeds; (6) deeds lead to fear (of God).” As I read this progressive, delineated steps toward the “fear of God,” I was immediately reminded of Romans 5:1-5:

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this

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<sup>49</sup> H. L. Strack and Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 109.

<sup>50</sup> Walter A. Elwell, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, s.v. “Mishna” (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 1475.

grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.<sup>3</sup> And not only this, (1) but we also exult in our tribulations, (2) knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;<sup>4</sup> (3) and perseverance, proven character; (4) and proven character, hope;<sup>5</sup> (5) and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Romans 5:1-5)

Can I say that the progression in Romans 5:1-5, written by Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is based directly on the influence of Hillel's progression in the above quote? Absolutely not, but can I say that it is a very good possibility that as a result of Paul having Gamaliel as his mentor, the influence of Hillel's teaching and writing methods were perhaps a grid for him in his writing and thinking? Yes, I do believe that is a very real and distinct possibility. That being the case, what does this have to do with Paul's quote of Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17? It has everything to do with it because Paul, through the mentorship of Gamaliel, who was mentored by Hillel, his grandfather, had all been greatly influenced and exegetically molded through midrashic, interpretive analysis of the Scripture, and that also includes the translators of the LXX, who, although they were long before Hillel, were unequivocally influenced and guided exegetically and literarily by midrashic, interpretive analysis of Scripture.

One last example of an overall midrashic approach toward scriptural interpretation in the New Testament with regard to prophecy is pointed out by Neusner in Matthew's Gospel in 1:18-23; 2:1-6; 2:16-18; and 3:1-3, which you may read for yourself, but Neusner's assessment is quite revealing of God's supernatural guidance and inspiration in leading Matthew to write as he did:

The passages of Matthew, therefore, indicate a clear-cut, distinctive choice on how to compose a "unit of discourse" and to join several congruent units of discourse into a sustained statement – a document. . . .

*Three things go together: (1) the principles or process of exegesis, (2) the purposes of exegesis accomplished in a given interpretation of a single verse, and (3) the formal program of collecting and arranging exegesis into compilations. . . .*

Thus we see, first, that what the people said and how they said it go together. What Matthew has taught us is to discern the relationship between form and meaning. He has furthermore shown us how Midrash functions as a work of prophecy. Specifically, Midrash involves the reading of the verses of ancient Israel's Scriptures in light of their meaning in the life and teachings of Jesus. What is of special interest here is how the Midrash-exegesis of the cited verses comes to full and rich expression in the Midrash-document, in our case, passages of the Gospel, and, furthermore, fully realizes the Midrash-process that guides the exegete's work. Thus we see the three dimensions of Midrash as prophecy in the Gospels.<sup>51</sup>

#### *The Linguistic and Theological Analysis of Habakkuk 2:4 and Romans 1:17*

The linguistic evidence of Paul's use of the LXX as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit in his writing of Scripture is unquestioned, and so too is the unquestioned aspect of the LXX

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<sup>51</sup> Jacob Neusner, *What is Midrash?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 39.



translators' using a midrashic approach toward the translation of the Hebrew text, which midrashic approach, as we have read above, was a standard of Jewish, biblical interpretation, which would include translation as well:

In estimating the general character of the version, it must be remembered that the translators were Jews, full of traditional thoughts of their own as to the meaning of Scripture; and thus nothing short of a miracle could have prevented them from infusing into their version the thoughts which were current in their own minds. They could only translate passages as they themselves understood them. This is evidently the case when their work is examined.<sup>52</sup>

Neusner is quite emphatic about the midrashic, interpretive analysis found in the LXX, which for him, is not in any way a deprecatory aspect, but rather a picture of the translators who wanted to present the Hebrew in the Greek language that was as accurate to the meaning of the Hebrew text as possible:

Despite their fidelity to the scriptural text, the translators of the Pentateuch produced a Midrash, the effects of which would have continuing influence on the subsequent exegetical work of both Jews and Christians. This achievement was effected primarily through such means as paraphrastic translations to secure an idiomatic rendering and interpretative additions, deletions, or reorderings of the text. It is the very presence of such elements in translation that force the student of LXX translations to recognize the problem of reconstructing the Hebrew text(s) used by the translators. In those instances in which the LXX text differs from the received or Masoretic Text, it may have been because of a different Hebrew text, but it may also have resulted from the translation style, or tendential concerns, or the attempt to harmonize parallel passages. It must also be said that on occasion, the differences may be explicable in terms of the inability to resolve the problems of the Hebrew text.<sup>53</sup>

And again, Emanuel Tov in his analysis of I Kings as an example, points out the reality of “midrashic” elements in the translation of the LXX:

The Greek text of 1 Kings differs greatly from its Hebrew counterpart: it omits parts, adds elements, contains important duplicate translations (cf. especially 1 Kings 2), its text is differently arranged and its chronological system differs from that of MT. Gooding has described these discrepancies, trying to demonstrate that they are not isolated phenomena, but are part of a deliberate scheme of re-ordering. Gooding's summarizing article (“Text and Midrash”) discusses the question at which level the changes entered the LXX. He concludes that the majority of the changes were probably inserted by a reviser of the LXX: ‘This revision was probably based, at least in part, on written Hebrew (or Aramaic) traditions of one kind or another’ (p. 2). These traditions may be pinpointed in some cases in rabbinic sources and Gooding provisionally calls them ‘haggadic midrash.’

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<sup>52</sup> Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986; reprint, 1987), iii.

<sup>53</sup> Neusner, *What is Midrash?*, 24-25.

Gooding's monograph on 1 Kings (Gooding, *Relics*) further described the deviating tradition of the Greek text of 1 Kings.<sup>54</sup>

In an earlier section of his book, Tov gives an outstanding analysis of the Masoretic, Hebrew Text of Joshua and the LXX, and it is entitled, "*Midrash-type exegesis probably introduced by the translator,*"<sup>55</sup> and I would highly recommend his book to anyone who wants to do serious study in a comparative analysis of the Masoretic Text, the LXX, and the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament. However, when all is said and done after diligently doing such a comparative study, Gleason Archer's comment is well worth noting and remembering as the foundation of our study:

Returning then to the apostolic use of the LXX, we find that this line of reasoning (that inexact quotations imply a low view of the Bible) is really without foundation. All of us employ standard translations of the Bible in our teaching and preaching, even those of us who are conversant with the Greek and Hebrew originals of Scripture. But our use of any translation in English, French, or any other modern language by no means implies that we have abandoned a belief in Scriptural inerrancy, even though some errors of translation appear in every one of those modern versions. We use those standard translations to teach our listeners in terms they can verify from the Bibles they have in their own homes. But most of us are also careful to point out that the only final authority as to the meaning of Scripture is the wording of the original languages themselves. There is no infallible translation, but that fact involves no surrender of the conviction that the original manuscripts of Scripture were free from all error. We must therefore conclude that the New Testament use of the LXX implies nothing against the verbal inspiration or Scriptural inerrancy.<sup>56</sup>

### *The Texts*

The dating of the Book of Habakkuk has been viewed from ca. 630 – 605 BC, taking into consideration the tempestuous events surrounding Judah during that time period and the predictive prophecy that Habakkuk was giving with reference to the "Chaldeans" being used by the Lord as a means of His judgment (Habakkuk 1:5-17). My former classmate at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Waylon Bailey, has teamed with Kenneth L. Barker to write an excellent commentary on Habakkuk, and he gives an excellent introductory analysis of Habakkuk, which clearly and accurately includes the likely date and circumstance of Habakkuk's prophecy.<sup>57</sup> Thus, Judah was facing a very difficult situation with the future onslaught of the Chaldeans (which would be the coming of Nebuchadnezzar in 605), and Habakkuk is calling the people to repentance and fully trusting in and committing their lives and their welfare as a

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<sup>54</sup> Emanuel Tov, *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (Atlanta: The Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 498.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 153-163.

<sup>56</sup> Archer and Chirichigno, x.

<sup>57</sup> Kenneth L. Barker and Waylon Bailey, *The New American Commentary: Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah, Vol. 20* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 259-287.

nation to the Lord and obedience to Him, with the final verses, in addition to this all important passage of 2:1-4, being a hallmark of commitment to the death in our trusting in the Lord that transcends time, location, and situation:

Though the fig tree should not blossom, And there be no fruit on the vines, *Though* the yield of the olive should fail, And the fields produce no food, *Though* the flock should be cut off from the fold, And there be no cattle in the stalls, <sup>18</sup> Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. <sup>19</sup> The Lord God is my strength, And He has made my feet like hinds' *feet*, And makes me walk on my high places. For the choir director, on my stringed instruments. (Habakkuk 3:17-19)

1. Masoretic Text – Habakkuk 2:1-4: “I WILL stand on my guard post and station myself on the rampart; and I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, and how I may reply when I am reproved. <sup>2</sup> Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision and inscribe *it* on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. <sup>3</sup> "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. *Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay.* <sup>4</sup> "Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; **But the righteous will live by his faith** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*).”
2. LXX Text – Habakkuk 2:1-4: “I will stand upon my watch, and mount upon the rock, and watch to see what He will say by me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. <sup>2</sup> And the Lord answered me and said, Write the vision, and *that* plainly on a tablet, that he that reads it may run. <sup>3</sup> For the vision *is* yet for a time, and it shall shoot forth at the end, and not in vain: though he should tarry, wait for him; for he will surely come, and will not tarry. <sup>4</sup> If he should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him: **but the just shall live by my faith** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*).”
3. New Testament Text – Romans 1:16-17: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘**But the righteous man shall live by faith** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*).”

As you read the MT (from now on for Masoretic Text) and the LXX, you can see a number of differences in the two passages. One of the first you may notice is that in the MT in verse 3, we read about the “vision,” or prophetic fulfillment that is coming, “*Though it tarries, wait for it*” and in the LXX we read, “though he should tarry, wait for him.” In Hebrew, there is no neuter pronoun “it,” but only the pronouns for “him” and “her” in singular and plural, you” in masculine and feminine in singular and plural forms, and “them” in masculine and plural in singular and feminine forms. “Me” and “us” are in a non-gendered state in both singular and plural forms. In addition, in Hebrew, the verb will match in gender the noun it is modifying. Thus, the word “vision” is a masculine noun (וִיזוֹן - *hāzōn*), and the verb “tarries” is in turn a masculine verb (יַתְמַחְמָח - *yithmahmāh*), and thus “it” (which is really “he”) is the Hebrew, masculine pronoun. What is also interesting with this verb “tarry” is that it is a rare hithpalpel,

verb form, which is a reflexive verb, meaning, “though it (he) causes itself (himself) to tarry,” thus implying that this “vision” is intrinsically linked to God’s sovereign timing. However, in the Greek, the verbs do not have masculine and feminine endings and thus, they do not match up with the gender of a noun, so, “though he should tarry” is not implying that the word for “vision” in Greek (ὄρασις – *horasis*) is a man (although in fact it is a feminine noun, but that doesn’t affect the verb form). But here in the LXX, the translators apparently understood the Hebrew word “vision,” which is a masculine noun, to be referring perhaps to a man, or perhaps even the “He,” God, because the Greek, personal pronoun used in the translation, “wait for him,” is the accusative, masculine, singular pronoun (αὐτόν – *auton* – “him”), versus the accusative, neuter, singular pronoun (αὐτό – *auto* – “it”).

Then in verse four, the MT reads, “Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him,” whereas in the LXX, we read, “If he should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”

In the MT, the term “proud one” is actually a verb, versus a noun, הַפְּאֵל (‘*ūppā’ā*). It is a Pual verb stem which indicates intensive, passive action, and it is also a feminine verb, modifying the feminine noun “soul.” It’s basic meaning is “to swell,” thus, the amplified translation would be, “Behold, it (i.e., she, referring to the feminine “soul”) has intensely been swollen, his soul is not going straight in him.” In the LXX, the first statement is also about the man as is the MT, “If he should choose to remain drawn back (the verb being an aorist, middle subjunctive, ὑποστείληται – *huposteilētai*),” but the second statement is totally about the Lord, “My soul continually finds (present, active indicative verb, εὐδοκεῖ – *eudokei*) no delight in him.” As we look at 2:4a, we therefore see an initial similarity in emphasizing the person who is rejecting the Lord, but in 2:4b, there is a distinct difference – the MT is focused on the person’s continued rebellion against the Lord, whereas in the LXX, the focus is on the Lord’s rejection of one who remains in rebellion against the Lord. In relation to this very clear distinction, Francis Anderson makes the following observation:

More startling is the divergence of LXX from the MT in its rendition of v 4a. There does not seem to be any hope of recovering a viable alternative Hebrew text by back-translation. Notable is the similarity of the change in the possessive pronoun in each half verse, “my” for “his.” LXX was on the right track to find in the two parts of the verse a contrast between two kinds of person. Because one of them is the *ṣaddîq*, the other must be the *rāšā’* who stands over against the *ṣaddîq* elsewhere in the book, harassing him (1:4), devouring him (1:13). The biggest switch is with the word “soul.” In the MT this is the swollen, crooked soul of the wicked person. In LXX, it is God’s soul.

The Greek rendition must be recognized as free interpretation, not accurate translation. At least, if an attempt is made to recover a different *Vorlage*, it could hardly oust the MT, the more so because the four words that caused LXX most trouble are extant in 1QpHab (Dead Sea Scroll of Habakkuk – my note): *hnh ’wplh lw’ ywśrh* (in Hebrew, this is הַנְּה אֹפְלָה לֹא – which is the same as in the MT of Habakkuk 2:4, minus the vowel pointing – “Behold, it is being intensely swollen, it is not going straight” – *my note*).<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Francis I. Anderson, *The Anchor Yale Bible: Habakkuk – A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Vol. 25 (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2008), 210.

Thus, Anderson recognizes that the LXX is not a word for word translation, but rather a “free interpretation,” but he also recognizes that the LXX midrashic, interpretive analysis “was on the right track to find in the two parts of the verse a contrast between two kinds of person.” Another very interesting observation on Habakkuk 2:4 in this same vein with reference to the LXX comes from David Clark and Howard Hatton:

This verse is quoted three times in the New Testament (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11 [Paul quotes his exact same translation as in Rom 1:17 – *my note*]; Heb 10:38 [this is Paul’s quote, plus the exact quote from 2:4a in the LXX – *my note*]) from its Septuagint translation. Paul makes it the basis for his doctrine of justification by faith, but in doing so he alters its meaning in two ways. First, the Greek word for “faith” does not have exactly the same components of meaning as the Hebrew word for “faithfulness.” The Greek word has a stronger element of intellectual and emotional commitment and less ethical emphasis. This change of focus was caused by the very fact of translation rather than by Paul’s deliberate choice. Secondly, Paul does deliberately link the words of Habakkuk together in a way different from that which Habakkuk intended. In linguistic terms, Paul uses a different immediate constituent analysis, that is, he sees a different set of semantic relationships between the words as they occur in the sentence. Whereas Habakkuk linked “by his faithfulness” with “shall live,” Paul linked “by faith” with “the righteous.” The contrast may be shown as “The righteous//shall live by faithfulness” (Habakkuk) as against “The righteous by faith//shall live” (Paul). In both the Hebrew and the Greek, the terms for “by faithfulness” or “by faith” come between “the righteous” and “shall live,” and so the change in the analysis can be made more easily than appears from the English. (Compare RSV Rom 1:17, “He who through faith is righteous shall live,” with TEV’s restructuring, “The person who is put right with God through faith shall live.”)<sup>59</sup>

Both of these observations are quite helpful, but neither fully addressed the second half of Habakkuk 2:4 in the LXX, and that is, **ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται** (*ho de dikaios ek pisteōs mou zēsetai*), “but the righteous one shall live out of/through/by means of my faith (that comes from Me, i.e., God – *my note*).” Paul, on the other hand, writes, **ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται** (*ho de dikaios ek pisteōs zēsetai*), “but the righteous one shall live out of/through/by means of faith,” leaving off the “my” in his quote, but does he actually leave out the meaning of this “saving faith” as coming from God?

Over the years as I have prayed over, read over, exegeted over, and researched over and through the Scriptures concerning this passage, along with many others related to it, I have come to the position that his statement in verse 17 that immediately precedes “but the righteous shall live by faith” is perhaps Paul’s midrashic, interpretive analysis of the LXX translation of “my faith” in Habakkuk 2:4. Romans 1:17 reads as follows in the Greek, **δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται** (*dkaiosunē gar theou en auto apokaluptetai ek pisteōs eis pistin, kathōs gegraptai: ho de dikaios ek pisteōs zēsetai*), with the amplified English translation, “For in it (i.e., the Gospel – *my note*) the righteousness of/from/through God is continually being revealed, out

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<sup>59</sup> David J. Clark and Howard A. Hatton, *A Handbook on Habakkuk* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 93.

of/from/through/by means of faith (i.e., the faith that comes from God as expressed in Habakkuk 2:4 in the LXX – *my note*) into (i.e., into a state of becoming saving faith for the recipient of this faith – *my note*) faith; just as it has been written and is in a continuous state of reality, ‘But the righteous one shall live out of/by means of/through faith (that comes from God – *my note*).’” Now if these were the only two verses in the Bible that seemed to suggest that saving and believing faith is a gift from God, my supposition about this would be very weak and tenuous, but I believe there are a number of other verses that support this view that Paul’s statement of “out of/from faith into faith” is a midrashic, interpretive, supportive analysis of the LXX translation of Habakkuk 2:4, “but the righteous one shall live out of/by means of/through my faith (i.e., God’s faith He gives as the gift of saving faith – *my note*). Thus, God gives us faith to believe as a gift, but in order for that faith to become real in our lives, we must in turn exercise it back into Him, through Jesus, for salvation, as well as every other promise He gives us in His Word.

In the Book of Acts, Chapter 3, when Peter and John were going to the Temple in Jerusalem to pray, they saw a man who had been born lame who was begging for money. As Peter and John began to go into the Temple, the lame man asked them for money, and Peter responded:

And Peter, along with John, fixed his gaze upon him and said, "Look at us!" <sup>5</sup> And he *began* to give them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup> But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene-- walk!" <sup>7</sup> And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were strengthened. <sup>8</sup> And with a leap, he stood upright and *began* to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. <sup>9</sup> And all the people saw him walking and praising God; <sup>10</sup> and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to *beg* alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. <sup>11</sup> And while he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the so-called portico of Solomon, full of amazement. <sup>12</sup> But when Peter saw *this*, he replied to the people, "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this, or why do you gaze at us, as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? <sup>13</sup> "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, *the one* whom you delivered up, and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. <sup>14</sup> "But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, <sup>15</sup> but put to death the Prince of life, *the one* whom God raised from the dead, *a fact* to which we are witnesses. <sup>16</sup> "And **on the basis of faith in His name** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*), *it is* the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and **the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*) in the presence of you all. (Acts 3:4-16)

In this last statement, “the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect health” is stating that the “faith” which healed the man was not something the man created, but rather the “faith which *comes* through Him,” that is Jesus, is the faith that healed and restored the man to complete health. Thus, a more amplified translation of this phrase would be, “and the faith which is through/by means of/from Him has given him this perfect health.” Thus, the faith for

this man to be healed was imparted to him through Jesus, and he in turn exercised it back into Jesus and he was healed.

In Romans 10:8-13, we have the last track of the Roman Road Plan of Salvation, and it reads:

But what does it say? "The **word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*) "-- that is, **the word of faith** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*) which we are preaching,<sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;<sup>10</sup> for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.<sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed."<sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him;<sup>13</sup> for "Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved." (Romans 10:8-13)

I see verse 8 saying that God has placed "the word of faith" within a person's "mouth and heart" so that they might respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11) in receiving Jesus as their Lord and Savior as God the Father, through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, "draws" them (John 6:44) to that place of confession of their sin (1 John 1:9), repentance, and receiving Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior (John 1:12-13). However, this is not some type of "robotic" response on the part of the individual whom God the Father is "drawing" to Jesus, but, as Romans 10:9-13 make it very clear, the individual has the final step of responsibility to either accept or reject the "gift of faith" God has given them. In a very practical way of explaining this truth, I use the example of me buying, cooking, and placing on the plate of a guest at my home a rib eye steak I have prepared for them. However, I do not stop at those three steps – I also get a knife and fork, cut a piece of the meat off, and place it in their mouth as I pull the fork out and leave the meat in their mouth. I have done everything for them to enjoy that piece of deliciously prepared meat, but the one thing I cannot do is chew and swallow it for them – that is their decision, and their decision alone. Thus, they can either accept and consume it, or they can at that time spit it out of their mouth – it is their decision and their decision alone! Therefore, I see the same thing being presented to us in Romans 10:8-13 – as God puts "the word of faith" in a person's "mouth and heart," they can either accept it and be saved, or they can reject it and remain lost.

Further down in Romans 10:16-17, we read, "However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?"<sup>17</sup> So **faith comes from hearing** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*), and hearing **by the word of Christ** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*)." What is quite interesting is that in both Romans 10:8 and 10:17, the word for "word" in the Greek is **ῥῆμα** (*hrēma*), which is one of the two words for "word" in Greek, the other being **λόγος** (*logos*). Although these two words can overlap as far as their meaning and usage in Greek, there is a difference that is worth noting in how these two words are perceived in both the New Testament, as well as in other aspects of Jewish literature:

*Logos.* Our lit. shows traces of a way of thinking that was widespread in contemporary syncretism, as well as in Jewish wisdom lit. and Philo, the most prominent feature of which is the concept of the Logos, the independent, personified ‘Word’ (of God): J 1:1a, b, c, 14.<sup>60</sup>

*Hrēma.* Of the words of (Christian) teaching or of divine understanding . . . *the special meaning of the teaching* . . .<sup>61</sup>

Therefore, in somewhat practical terms, *logos* is the eternal Word of God, His very essence of eternal truth that was expressed in the God-Man, Jesus Christ, whereas *hrēma* is that eternal truth of the Person of Jesus Christ that becomes real and alive within a human being as they receive Jesus into their heart for salvation, and for the believer, as he or she continues to “abide in the words (*hrēmata*)” of Jesus Christ throughout their lives (John 15:1-17).

The next passage that is of tremendous importance is Ephesians 2:8-10:

For by grace you have been saved **through faith** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*); and that not of yourselves, *it is* **the gift of God** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*);<sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, that no one should boast.<sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

This passage has engendered debate as to whether or not “the gift of God” is referring to “faith” or to “salvation” as a whole. As we look at the verse in the Greek, it is quite important to notice the modifying elements in this passage. First of all, the phrase, “you have been saved” is what is called a “periphrastic construction,” wherein “The participle is used with a compound verb to constitute a compound tense-form.”<sup>62</sup> The reason for this construction is greater “emphasis” for whatever the aspect of the particular verb is being used in the periphrastic construction.<sup>63</sup> Thus, here in Ephesians 2:8, the phrase, “you have been saved” is a periphrastic perfect construction, and therefore, the amplified translation would be, “For by means of grace and grace alone YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED AND ARE REMAINING SAVED THROUGH AND BY MEANS OF FAITH!!!” Secondly, the phrase, “and that not of yourselves” is absolutely huge, as it clearly is pointing out, from my perspective, that even the “faith” to believe is not something we produce, but rather it is “the gift of God,” otherwise, we could indeed boast of “our great faith” that saved us, versus someone who doesn’t have as much innate “faith” as we do to believe and be saved. The word “that” is the demonstrative, neuter, nominative pronoun **τοῦτο** (*touto*), and it is at this point that the debate over whether or not “that” is referring to “faith,” which is a feminine, Greek noun, or to “salvation” as a whole, but the word for “salvation” in Greek is also a feminine noun, or perhaps it is referring to “grace,” but “grace” is also a Greek,

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<sup>60</sup> Arndt and Gingrich, 480.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 742-743.

<sup>62</sup> H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: The MacMillan Company, 1955; reprint, 1969), 231.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 231—233.



feminine noun. That being the case, what is this neuter, demonstrative pronoun referring to? The word “spirit” in Greek is a neuter noun, but in numerous places in the New Testament, the “Holy Spirit” is referred to as “He” with a masculine, demonstrative pronoun, versus “It,” as the neuter gender would tend to be interpreted, and thus, be modified with a neuter, demonstrative pronoun. One very good example of this grammatical construction is in John 14:26: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*) will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” The word “He” in the Greek is the masculine, demonstrative pronoun, **ἐκεῖνος** (*ekeinos*), which literally translated is “That One,” meaning the masculine “That One,” versus, **ἐκεῖνο** (*ekeino*), which is the neuter, demonstrative pronoun, and the neuter, according to Greek grammar, would be the appropriate one to use since “Spirit” (**πνεῦμα** – *pneuma*) is a neuter noun. However, because the “Holy Spirit” is not an “It,” but rather the third “Person” of the Trinity, a masculine, demonstrative pronoun is used to refer to “Him.” In the same way, therefore, I see the neuter, demonstrative pronoun, **τοῦτο** (*touto*) in Ephesians 2:8 as referring to “gift” and “faith,” which are the means by which the “gift of God *that* is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” is received by a repentant sinner.

The last example of the “gift of faith” coming from God through Jesus is in Hebrews 12:1-2:

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, **the author and perfecter of faith** (*my underline and embolden for emphasis*), who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

In the above passage, the phrase, “the author and perfecter of faith,” is communicating to us that Jesus is the “beginning and end” of our “faith,” versus us creating the “faith” by which we are saved. The word for “author” in Greek is **ἀρχηγός** (*archēgos*), and it means “*leader, ruler, prince . . . one who begins* someth. as first in a series and thus supplies the impetus . . . *originator, founder . . .* Hb 12:2. . . .”<sup>64</sup> In addition, the word “perfecter” is **τελειωτής** (*teleiōtēs*), and it means “perfecter,” and this is the only occurrence of this word in the Greek New Testament.<sup>65</sup> The verb from which this noun is derived is **τελειόω** (*teleiōō*), which means “to complete, bring to an end, accomplish . . . bring to its goal . . . bring to full measure . . . make perfect . . .”<sup>66</sup> Thus, not only does Jesus “originate” our “faith” in us through it being given to us as God’s “gift” by which we enter into His salvation through Jesus Christ, but Jesus is also the One who “brings to completion, full measure, and perfection (when we enter heaven at death)” that faith as we daily surrender to His Lordship in our lives (Luke 9:23-24), and this is

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<sup>64</sup> Arndt and Gingrich, 112.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 818.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 817.

the process of sanctification, which is the manifestation of God's loving discipline in our lives throughout our lifetime as believers in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:4-11).

### *Practical Application*

As I have walked with the Lord as a born again believer in Jesus Christ for forty-nine years, three months, and twenty days, I have come to realize that just as Paul said in I Timothy 1:15, "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*," I too "am the foremost *of all*," and the ABSOLUTE, ONLY THING I can ever appeal to is the incredible, marvelous, wonderful grace and mercy of God that has been poured on me through Jesus Christ! This realization has come as I have seen and experienced His grace, mercy, and loving discipline in my life in the face of my many sins and failures over my lifetime, whereby through His discipline, He has enabled me "to share His holiness," as well as experience the "peaceful fruit of *His* righteousness" in my life through Jesus Christ. And through that discipline, He has lovingly, mercifully, and graciously been "conforming me to the image of His Son," as I have in NO WAY, EVER BEEN ABLE TO CONFORM MYSELF! All of this has occurred through Hebrews 12:1-2 as He has enabled and caused me to choose to "abide in His Word," whereby He has enabled me, by His Holy Spirit, "to know the truth," and that very truth, from His Word, has and is continually "setting me free" in Jesus Christ (John 8:31-32).

One of the most amazing things of this process of sanctification over the past forty-nine years, three months, and twenty days is that as I grow chronologically and spiritually older in Jesus, I see sin today that I didn't even realize was sin two years ago, one year ago, one month ago, and in some cases, even the day before! What is occurring is that God is continually "conforming me to the image of His Son," whereby my life is more and more about Jesus and less and less about me, which is exactly what John the Baptist was saying when his disciples came and told him that "He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have borne witness, behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him" (John 3:26). John responded with one of the most powerfully true statements about our relationship with Jesus as His children and followers that is stated in the Scriptures, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). An amplified translation of this verse would be, "He must continually increase, but I must continually choose to be decreased (the verb "decrease" is a present, middle/passive infinitive, thus both the reflexive and passive voices)." Thus, as Jesus continually increases in my life as I continually choose to be decreased, I see that it is His grace and mercy alone that enables me to grow in Him as I see the depth and permeation of sin within my life as I grow older chronologically and spiritually in Him. And once again, that is what I firmly believe Paul was stating in I Timothy 1:15, which is an emphatic statement, as the first person, personal pronoun ἐγώ (egō) is placed at the end of the phrase following the finite verb εἰμι (eimi), and an amplified translation would be, "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost, I!" This is indeed, FREEDOM IN JESUS CHRIST!