

Paul's Usage of Old Testament Proof Passages, Especially in the Book of Romans

A Case Study in the Inspired Authors' Handling of Inspired Texts

By Aaron C. Frey

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Introduction

When I first noticed those little footnotes in the NIV Bible I had received from Pastor Grant in Sunday School, I remember thinking how nice it was of the Bible people to tell us where we could find passages from the Old Testament that had been quoted by New Testament authors. I also remember thinking to myself, "Nice, but not necessary. It's not like I'm going to check up on the Bible to see if it's using itself properly!"

If I recall correctly, I first started looking up some of those references in junior high, when I started reading the Bible in bed before I went to sleep. I noticed some differences, which almost bothered me, but by then I was in confirmation class and Pastor Grant had taught me that the Old Testament and the New Testament were written in two different languages, and so I chalked up any dissimilarities to the difficulty of trying to render the same thing written in two tricky, archaic languages into English.

It wasn't until I was a student at MLS that I started writing the occasional paper that required a closer look at the wording of particular passages. Then I began to be a bit miffed. Could the concepts of "give" and "receive" be so similar in Greek and Hebrew that the language alone would be an adequate explanation for why Ephesians 4 says that Christ gave gifts to men and Psalm 68, which is being quoted, says that he received them? How come every now and then Paul quotes a passage that seems to come out about as well as the memory work I'm doing for Dean Brenner's class? Doesn't the Holy Spirit take care of that stuff for inspired authors?

The Lord certainly is patient with our lack of faith, isn't he? He was willing to wait as many as fifteen years before sending Geoff Kieta to call me up and assign this paper to me. But, of course, I'm happy that he did, and I pray that our joy will increase together as we take a few moments to bask in the miracle of Scriptural unity and the genius of the Holy Spirit in putting his Word together in the way that he did.

In an attempt to make this project more manageable, the assignment committee decided to focus our attention this morning on Paul's use of Old Testament quotes—and his usage of the Old Testament especially in the book of Romans. The study, of course, required the occasional word from another of his epistles or even another New Testament author, but our focus will ultimately remain on this "chief part of the New Testament"¹ as a case study in Old Testament proof texts. Besides Luther's high opinion of the book, it also makes an excellent case study because it contains within its sixteen chapters more OT quotations than any other NT book, including Matthew (60 versus 53, according to the chart of OT quotations in the back of my UBS4). In fact, Paul's quotations from OT texts make up a full one-third of all such references in the entire NT², and the book of Romans contains more than half of all the OT quotations from all of Paul's epistles combined!

Brief History of the Modern Pauline Hermeneutic

Do Paul and other NT writers misquote the OT? Paul's works have particularly been scrutinized in this area for a number of reasons that we will get into in a moment, but for now let us make the general observation that the last 150 years have seen a definite progression of thought on that subject. Of course, we could start even earlier with the rise of rationalism, but our quick historical overview will limit itself to a glance at the various

¹ *Luther's Works* 35:365.

² E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 11.

works on the subject of OT quotation that have been considered of historical import among those who like to think of this as their field of study. For simplicity's sake, we will break the last century and a half down into three 50-year chunks.

For those of you particularly interested in the groundwork of current thought, you could turn to the historical survey contained in the introduction of Ellis' work, cited above.³ One might pay particular attention to the wranglings of Toy and Turpie (Toy being more the critic). Kaiser also has an extensive set of conclusions from that period of study in his recent work, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*.⁴ But for our purposes we can summarize the hot issues of the time by quoting Franklin Johnson's 1895 list of objections:

1. The writers of the New Testament, instead of translating their quotations directly from the Hebrew, and thus presenting us with exact transcriptions of the original text, have taken them generally from the Septuagint version, which is not free from fault.
2. Their quotations from the Septuagint are often verbally inexact, and their variations from this version are seldom in the nature of correction, since they usually seem to have quoted from memory.
3. They sometimes employ quotations so brief and fragmentary that the reader cannot readily determine the degree of support, if any, which the quotation gives to the argument.
4. They sometimes alter the language of the Old Testament with the obvious design of aiding their argument.
5. They sometimes present in the form of a single quotation an assemblage of phrases or sentences drawn from different sources.
6. In a few instances they give us, apparently as quotation from the Old Testament, sentences which it does not contain.
7. They regard some historical passages of the Old Testament as allegories, and thus draw from them inferences of which the original writers knew nothing.
8. They often "quote by sound, without regard to the sense."
9. They habitually treat as relating to the Messiah and his kingdom passages written with reference to persons who lived and events which happened centuries before the Christian era.
10. When they understand the passage which they quote, they often argue from it in an inconclusive and illogical manner, so that the evidence which they adduce does not prove the statement which they seek to support by means of it.
11. They deal with the Old Testament after the manner of the rabbis of their time, which was uncritical and erroneous, rather than as men inspired by the Holy Spirit to perceive and express exact truth.⁵

³ Ellis 2-5.

⁴ Walter C. Kaiser, *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), pp. 6-10.

⁵ Franklin Johnson, as quoted in James A. Panning, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: Did the New Testament Writers 'Misquote' Scripture?" Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Essay File, pp. 2-3.

The next fifty years or so of study saw an expansion of this type of criticism, but also a strong backlash on the part of those who were not ready to give up the unity of Scripture quite so brashly. We probably know those who expanded the criticism all too well. It's the backlash that should most interest us, I think—not only because of their defense of the Scriptures but also because of the ways in which they failed to defend it. Ellis echoes the “conservative” scholarship of those years as he develops for his readers a number of explanations for Paul's seemingly loose handling of the text, including: the usage of the Hebrew to correct mistranslations in the LXX, citations from Aramaic targums or other “folksy” translations that are no longer extant, and finally free quotation from memory.⁶

It is at this point where we need to keep our eyes and ears sharp, pray for discernment from the Spirit, and prepare ourselves with the Spirit's sword. Ellis, again typical of the era's “conservative” scholarship, offers a very spirited defense of Paul's skill and propriety in handling the OT Scriptures—but not a spirited defense of verbal inspiration. He says,

Paul often given the impression of quoting from memory, ‘yet a memory which was the storehouse of more than one language, and one trained in Jewish methods of bringing together passages from different books of the Old Testament’. From a psychological viewpoint it might be expected that one who knew the Scripture in several languages and had a thorough knowledge of the sense of Scripture would be less tied to any text-form. ‘Memory quotation’ should be understood, however, as a free rendering in accordance with literary custom or for an exegetical purpose, rather than a result of ‘memory lapse’.⁷

Throughout this section of his treatise, Ellis sounds very respectful of Paul's writings and he provides ample references from the scholars of his age. Never once, however, does he make reference to the only support truly needed to validate Paul's use of the Old Testament: the Holy Spirit. “This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words” (1Co 2:13).

This plea to respect rabbinic training instead of fleeing to the sure foundation of the Word's inspired nature left Ellis and his contemporaries rather unprepared for the most recent fifty-year span within our concern: The Age of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Ellis is an interesting case study in this sense. His book stands at the crossroads between two hermeneutic eras. As we have already seen, his references to early twentieth century scholarship capture the spirit of his age. On the other hand, his observations at the dawn of Dead Sea Scroll discovery acted as a filter through which all future scholarship in Pauline literature would be viewed.⁸ And that filter was named “rabbinic.” Kaiser laments,

Modern interpreters are overly affected by what they have learned from Jewish or Qumranian “exegetical” practices. Why do we insist that these intertestamental methodologies are more normative and more closely approximate the style of the NT writers? True, Paul was the student of Gamaliel, but then why was it necessary for him to make a major point of the fact that upon his conversion he “did not consult with any man, nor did [he] go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before [he] was, but [he] went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus [and] went up to Jerusalem [only] after three years [had] elapsed” (Gal. 1:16-18)? ...it is clearly a major break. Surely this must mean, in part, that he had much to learn, if not relearn, about the way he had understood and approached Scriptures.⁹

⁶ Ellis 13-15.

⁷ Ellis 14-15.

⁸ D. Moody Smith, Jr., “The Use of the Old Testament in the New,” *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring*, ed. James M. Efird (Duke University Press: Durham, NC), p. 36. Cf. also Kaiser 13.

⁹ Kaiser 229.

Of course, the Holy Spirit does choose the man he wants. He calls each one individually¹⁰ and makes use of their experience, style and intellect, even though he is giving them word-for-word precisely what he wants recorded.¹¹ So, is it useful to keep in mind that Paul had been trained as a rabbi? Perhaps. Is there any benefit in studying the exegetical style of the Qumran sect? Maybe. But first we must understand that the real author of Paul's works was God (2Pe 1:21). Therefore we must first and foremost let the text speak for itself. Whether or not the scholarly research of the critics can benefit us in our hermeneutics must be considered secondarily—and it will be considered as we spend some time with some pertinent passages and the patterns they form in the book of Romans.

Patterns in Paul's OT Quotations

I had never considered the quotations in the book of Romans statistically before researching this paper. It seemed a difficult subject to broach while avoiding the temptation to test God on some level. But, unsurprisingly, a statistical examination of the overall usage of OT quotes has no more power to find a weakness in God's truth than an intensive, critical exegesis.

The type of statistics that I thought would be most useful for our purposes was an analysis of different categories of quotations. Take, for example, the chart reproduced (and only slightly modified) in the Appendix. The table is largely copied straight over from the analytical appendices in the back of Ellis' book, in which he covers not only Romans but the entire Pauline corpus. One of the nice things about his chart is that he tends to stick to more direct quotes of the OT (the kind you find in bold type in your Greek New Testaments), leaving the allusions that may or may not qualify for a specific cross reference pretty much alone.

His categories are very rigid, offering flexibility only in the form of asterisks and footnotes. Class 1 is a quotation that is in agreement with both the LXX and the MT. Class 2 agrees with the LXX against the MT. Class 3 agrees with the MT against the LXX. Classes 4 and 5 are at variance with both the LXX and the MT. Class 4 is at variance with them even though they both agree. Class 5 is where Paul is at variance with both, and they are at variance with one another.

I would think that the classification we would find most surprising is number 4, where the LXX and MT agree but Paul takes a different path. It might also be shocking that a full fifth of all the quotations Ellis analyzed fell under that category. It is worth noting, however, that the vast majority of the quotations that Ellis classified as a number 4 (7 out of 11) were also qualified with a note saying that the difference was either very slight or related only to word order. Class 5 might surprise us as well, not only because you would think that Paul would side with the MT where the two texts vary but because almost *two* fifths of the quotations analyzed fall under this classification. The qualifying footnote once again reduces the shock, however, by reminding us that the method for classification was very rigid.

Other ways one might look at the chart make it less surprising. For instance, if you combine classifications 1, 2 and 3 you find that Paul sides with one or the other of the two texts almost half the time. Among the instances where he quotes in such a way that he varies somewhat with both texts, the LXX has a problematic translation for two thirds of them, making it more logical for Paul to want to clarify the real meaning of the passage for his Greek-speaking audience.

Pieper supplies a simpler set of statistics for the book of Romans: "According to our count, there are in the Epistle to the Romans forty-seven quotations from the Old Testament, only twenty-four of which can be classed as literal."¹² He does not list the verses he counts as quotations, but he does come up short of Ellis' list by a half dozen. He might be limiting himself to quotes with introductory formulae (e.g., "as it is written," or "as Isaiah says"), or he might be treating chains of references (e.g., 3:10-18) as a single quote. One thing for sure that he did

¹⁰ *Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Dogmatics Course Notes*. electronic ed., 2 vols. (Mequon, WI: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 1999), vol. 2, p. 21 (II.2.).

¹¹ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), vol. 1, p. 247.

¹² Pieper, vol. 1, p. 247.

differently was to treat the doctrine of inspiration with greater respect, even while he classed half of Paul's quotations as non-literal.

And how does Pieper reconcile the two? He explains,

The deviations in form from the wording of the Old Testament texts are of various kinds. In some cases the New Testament writers have expanded the Old Testament text (e.g., Is. 61:1; Luke 4:18); in numerous other cases contracted it (Is. 8:22; 9:1 f.; Matt. 4:15); in several instances the order of the sentences has been inverted (Hos. 2:23; Rom. 9:25); frequently several passages are blended into one (Jer. 32:6 ff.; Zech. 11:12-13; Matt. 27:9). That this method of quoting always preserved the original sense of the Old Testament words is *a priori* certain to all who believe that the Evangelists and Prophets spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. It can also be proved *a posteriori*, in the light of the New Testament, that the intended sense of the Old Testament text is none other than the one expressed in the New Testament.¹³

And so we shall see, as we now examine some passages that often raise objections among the critics but which to the open hearts and ears of the children of God demonstrate the true unity of God's revelation of himself in the Holy Scriptures.

Model Passages from the Pauline Debates

1:1-2 – Paul's Purpose in Using OT Texts

One need go no further than the first two verses of the book of Romans to see the connection Paul sees between the message he is laying out for his readers and the message of the OT: "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through the prophets in the Holy Scripture...." He quotes the OT because that's where his message is from. He is not interested in preaching a new message. He has been called by God to declare the fulfillment of the old, old promise. He has been set apart to show to Jew and Gentile alike that the ancient scrolls inspired by God and entrusted to his people spoke of Jesus Christ—his life, his death and his resurrection from the dead.

As such Paul is not going to toy around with that message. It is the key to his mission, defined and handed down to him by the resurrected Savior himself. Paul will *handle* the Scriptures skillfully, but never would he violate them. To do so would be to violate the very gospel he was called to preach.

1:17 – Is This Theme Verse Misused?

There are two main problems perceived in the passage that is considered the theme verse for the book of Romans: "The righteous will live by faith." The first is that Paul is taking advantage of a Greek word used in the LXX even though it doesn't accurately reflect the meaning of the original Hebrew word. This is a dangerous assertion, as the whole foundation of Romans rests on this one verse.

The argument goes that *πίστις* in Greek has an active sense to it, that is, the idea of believing in something. *אמונה*, on the other hand, is more passive—the idea of being faithful. However, such arguments ignore the fact that *אמונה* does get used in the same sense as *πίστις*. For an example, see Numbers 14:11, where the Lord asks Moses, "How long will [these people] refuse to believe in me (לֹא-יֶאֱמִינוּ בִּי)...?"¹⁴

The other objection to Paul's use of this passage focuses around its place in the book of Habakkuk (2:4). The immediate context is the comparison between someone who suffers patiently under the forces of Babylon and

¹³ Ibid., 247-8.

¹⁴ Ellis 117.

the people of Babylon's greed-filled empire. Does this have anything to do with justification? Then how is it that this verse can serve as the foundation for Paul's justification theology?

While there is truth in saying that the immediate context mentions nothing about justification, it is not only a clear part of the words themselves, but Habakkuk as a whole does establish the theme that faith is the most basic component in the relationship between the child of God and his or her Father in heaven.

3:10-18 and Chapters 9-11 – Chain Quotes, *Haraz*, and Rabbinic Sermons

These sections of Romans are certainly hotbeds of debate among scholars who try to classify Paul's style as "rabbinic." As was noted before, this is usually said in order to call into question how appropriately Paul uses proof texts.

3:10-18 is a string of texts, mostly from the Psalms, which Paul introduces as though it were a single unit ("As it is written..."). Chapters 9-11 is Paul's answer to the question of whether or not God has been unfaithful to his promises to the Jews, since so many have rejected the faith. More than half of all the OT quotes in Romans come from these three chapters.

This kind of grouping of quotes makes some critics think of *haraz*, a style of preaching popular in the synagogues and rabbinic schools where an expositor would take a passage from Moses' writings and then attempt to "string it together" with a passage from the Prophets and a passage from the Hagiographa—hence the *haraz*, or "string of pearls." According to Edersheim anything from the clever to the downright ridiculous was used in the synagogue in order to bolster a preacher's reputation as being an especially able handler of the Scriptures. "Thus" according to one of Edersheim's footnotes,

[W]hen on one occasion the hearers of Akiba were going to sleep during his sermon, he called out: 'Why was Queen Esther in Persia over 127 provinces? Answer: She was a descendant of Sarah, who lived 127 years. ... On a similar occasion R. Jehudah startled the sleepers by the question: 'One woman in Egypt bore 600,000 men in one birth.' One of his hearers immediately replied to the question, who she was: 'It was Jochebed, who bore Moses, who is reckoned equal to all the 600,000 of Israel' ...¹⁵

This is plainly not Paul's style in Romans or elsewhere. While he does make an effort to show how the Scriptures teach basic truths through iteration,¹⁶ nowhere does he use clever word tricks to support his doctrine. Why does he string so many quotations together in chapters 9-11? Because he is answering a challenge to God's justice and his faithfulness to his Word, since so many from his chosen nation had rejected him. He uses Scripture—extensively—to show that nothing could be further from the truth, and that the salvation of the whole remnant, not the whole nation, had been predicted all along (11:3-5, 7-11, 13, 25-27).

3:10-18; 9:25-26,33 and 11:8 – *Testimonia* vs. Skilled and Guided Amalgamation

One more thought that must be considered in connection with the string of passages in chapter three is the Book of Testimonies hypothesis. Again taking their cue off of discoveries in the Qumran caves, some have offered the theory that variances in quotations and "errors" in referencing (cf. Mark 1:2,3 and Mt 27:9, where some insist that a blatant error exists in the Scriptures because OT quotations were attributed to the wrong prophets. Cf. also Lenski on both) are due to a collection of proof passages that the early church passed around for quick reference in combating Jewish arguments against Jesus being the Christ. Errors in these *testimonia* would explain some of the quotations that don't exactly follow either the Hebrew or the LXX.¹⁷

¹⁵ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p. 311.

¹⁶ Ellis 50.

¹⁷ Smith 26.

Is it possible that such a book existed? I suppose anything's possible. Is it necessary to explain "errors"? That, of course, would presuppose that you rejected the Bible's assertion of inerrancy and infallibility ("The Scriptures cannot be broken"). The fact that there is no evidence of such a book and the fact that many of the "altered" texts are not so much direct quotes but summaries of context, which would not be in such a book, militates against it.¹⁸

A close examination of some of Paul's quotes that are used to support the idea of a collection of *testimonia* shows the "safety net" of a proof-text textbook to be unnecessary. Ellis classifies the first of Paul's string of quotes in chapter three as a class 4 (at variance with both the LXX and the Hebrew, even though they both agree). The problem with his classification is that it doesn't take *everything* Paul is referring to into account. Ellis' classification would have us see this "sloppy" quotation in this manner:

Romans 3:10-12 (NIV)

¹⁰ As it is written:
 "There is no one righteous, not even one;
¹¹ there is no one who understands,
 no one who seeks God.
¹² All have turned away,
 they have together become worthless;
 there is no one who does good,
 not even one."

Psalm 14:1-3 (NIV)

¹ The fool says in his heart,
 "There is no God."
 They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
 there is no one who does good.
² The LORD looks down from heaven
 on the sons of men
 to see if there are any who understand,
 any who seek God.
³ All have turned aside,
 they have together become corrupt;
 there is no one who does good,
 not even one.

Whereas, in reality, it ought to be viewed more like this:

¹⁰ As it is written:
 "There is no one righteous, not even one;
¹¹ there is no one who understands,
 no one who seeks God.
¹² All have turned away,
 they have together become worthless;
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 to see if there are any who understand,
 any who seek God.
³ All have turned aside,
 they have together become corrupt;
 there is no one who does good,
 not even one.

Psalm 53:1-3 (NIV)

The fool says in his heart,
 "There is no God."
 They are corrupt, and their ways are
 vile;
 there is no one who does good.
² God looks down from heaven
 on the sons of men
 to see if there are any who understand,
 any who seek God.
³ Everyone has turned away,
 they have together become corrupt;
 there is no one who does good,
 not even one.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 (NIV)

²⁰ There is not a righteous man on
 earth
 who does what is right and never
 sins.

¹⁸ Henry M. Shires, *Finding the Old Testament in the New* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), p. 73.

Rather than falling prey to a memory lapse or being too lazy to check his sources or being thrown off by a pat set of *testimonia*, Paul shows absolutely masterful skill. He accurately and effectively combines recurring thoughts in Scripture, calling to the reader’s mind more than the sum of the words he was led to record.

A very similar thing happens with Paul’s use of the books of Hosea and Isaiah in chapter 9. Here are his quotes from Hosea lined up next to the actual text from which his thoughts originate:

<p>Romans 9:25-26 (NIV) ²⁵ As he says in Hosea: “I will call them ‘my people’ who are not my people; and I will call her ‘my loved one’ who is not my loved one,” ²⁶ and, “It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’”</p>	<p>Hosea 2:23 (NIV) I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ I will say to those called ‘Not my people,’ ‘You are my people’; and they will say, ‘You are my God.’”</p> <p>Hosea 1:10 In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’</p>
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If you look at Ellis’ classifications once again, you’ll find that the quotation from Hosea 2:23 gets that nasty class 4 rating (with no qualifying asterisk), just like the opening verses of the long string in chapter 3. Pieper sided with God in saying that all the things that God says about his inspired prophets must be accepted *a priori*, yet careful study will also prove it to be true *a posteriori*. By being a slave to the letters and failing to take into account the meanings conveyed by the words, such classifications run the risk of making the Holy Spirit look capricious. A readiness to trust in God’s Word as the inspired work it claims to be is our best defense against such simplistic slop.

It is the same with the Isaiah passages mentioned before as well. Paul says in 9:33, “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” Again this is an amalgamation of similar, repeated and treasured thoughts for Paul’s audience. The two verses Paul appears to be drawing from are Is 8:14 (“and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”) and 28:16 (“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.”).

This type of amalgamation also helps to understand why 11:8 (“God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day”) doesn’t sound like any one passage of the OT. Lenski points the exegete toward four different passages, the ideas of which are all brought out by the Spirit’s words through Paul in Romans 11.¹⁹ This quotation again displays his mastery of Scripture and inspired guidance by showing a truly divine handling of recurring themes from various passages.

8:36 – Not all Israel Is Israel

We’re all very familiar with the confusion that has arisen in eschatological studies surrounding 11:26, “And so all Israel will be saved.” It’s easy for us to keep it straight because we can always just check back with our Greek and recognize that the better way to translate it is, “And *in this way* all Israel will be saved.” Then we look back at how Paul defines “this way” in the last verse: “Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of Gentiles has come in.” And, *voila!* We’re off the false teaching of a mass, last-day conversion of all

¹⁹ R. C. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1936), 687. The passages he suggests the student of Scripture consider are Is 29:10, Dt. 29:4, Ezek. 12:2, Is 6:9.

Israelites and onto the reminder that Paul, like the OT prophets, is not always referring to the nation of Israel when he says *Israel*. Sometimes he is speaking of the children of the faith of Abraham.

8:36 shows us that this hermeneutical principal applies to the way Paul uses OT passages as well. Critics complain that this verse is used out of context. The immediate context of Ps 44 is the complaint of Israel that they are suffering a crushing blow from one of their enemies even though the faithful within her are being faithful. Paul uses it to refer universally to the suffering of all believers, no matter what their nationality or period in history.

Hopefully we are just as quick to answer that criticism as we are to recognize the faulty interpretation of the millennialists who say that evangelizing the Jews is unnecessary since they will all be saved anyway. Not all Israel is Israel.

11:3 and 9:17 – Stylized and Interpretive Quotes

By “stylized” I mean that a quote has consciously not been quoted word-for-word but adjusted somehow to the flow of the paragraph simply because it was the author’s choice to do so. We do this kind of quoting all the time when we preach and write. We may use brackets within a direct quote to put an antecedent in where there is a pronoun in the original, or we may leave the quotation marks completely off and think of it as an allusion, even though we did use most of the actual words from the verse we are alluding to.

We may find it annoying at times, but we must remember that Paul and his contemporaries did not have the benefit of our extensive set of punctuation marks. So we must be as flexible in reading NT authors as we are flexible in producing our own works based on Scripture and not be too upset if Paul writes, “Don’t you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah—how he appealed to God against Israel: ‘Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left and they are trying to kill me’?” (11:3) Paul knew full well that Elijah actually said, “The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.” Without question he has done nothing to twist the meaning of Elijah’s words.

9:17 illustrates this on a somewhat broader scale. Paul and the LXX disagree on how to translate **הִקְדַּמְתִּי**. The translators of the LXX go with the idea of God preserving Pharaoh through the recent plague of boils (*διετηρήθης*). Paul, being more faithful to the causative nature of the hiphil form—and more true to its usage with **בָּמַע** elsewhere—translates *ἐξήγειρά*. For this Paul seems the champion of the MT.

But then he departs from both the LXX and the MT with “ὅπως ἐνδείξωμαι ἐν σοὶ τὴν δύναμιν” (“so that I might demonstrate my power in you”). The MT has “**בְּעֵבוֹר הַרְאֵתִי אֶת־כְּהִי**” (“so that I might show you my power”). You might say that Paul is going back to the LXX at this point (*ἵνα ἐνδείξωμαι ἐν σοὶ τὴν ἰσχύν μου*), but he’s not exactly quoting the LXX directly either. So what’s he doing?

The simple answer is, like with 11:3, he just plain isn’t quoting directly. He’s referencing the verse, yes, but he has referenced it in such a way as to take in more of the story that goes with the verse, more of the ultimate purpose God had in performing his wonders in Egypt. Would a critic be right in calling his quotation free, even interpretive? We need not feel uncomfortable saying, “Yes.” But who better to interpret the story than the Spirit himself, working through Paul? Besides, once again *a posteriori* proof holds up for those who wish to accept it.

Conclusion

We could go on. We could even look at more “difficult” passages. In Romans 10:6-8 Paul borrows words from Dt 30 not because they are related closely enough to what he is saying to act as true proof passages, but because the words were familiar and convenient and available.²⁰ Does not the Spirit have the right to use his words in this way if it pleases him? Must that be a problem for us?

²⁰ James A. Panning 10.

We will never convince the unbelieving scholar of the validity of the doctrine of verbal inspiration. It is foolishness to him because it is spiritually discerned.²¹ But what the Spirit says, we know to be true, and the Spirit himself testifies to it both in the Word and in our own hearts. The closer I get back to that kid who looked at the footnotes of his first grown-up Bible and said, “That’s nice, but I don’t need to check the Bible against itself,” the better off I know I’ll be.

I told one of the brothers who was looking forward to digging into this paper that I hope he wasn’t disappointed that after all the pages of reading and hours of study there was still nothing better to say on this subject than what Francis Pieper said about it in his rather unexotic dogmatics text that none of us has to drive to the Seminary library to read. If he’s like me, though, I don’t think he found that disappointing.

²¹ Did that “loose” usage of 1Co 2:14 disturb you?

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