

GOD'S GIFTS IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT:  
AN ANALYTICAL AND SYNTHETICAL STUDY  
OF PAUL'S HERMENEUTICS IN  
EPHESIANS 4:8

by  
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## FOREWORD

To my bride of less than one year, Debbie. Her encouragement in the late hours of study has prompted me to make this thesis 43 pages instead of 63 pages.

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The writer does not believe that Paul changed the Hebrew reading "receive" in Psalm 68:19 to the Greek "gave" in Ephesians 4:8 to employ a midrash exegesis or pesher convention. Rather Paul is drawing an analogy from the psalm. Even as when God ascended on Mount Zion and took the Levites captive to perform spiritual service unto Him, so when Jesus ascended into heaven, He took certain men captive and gave them gifts to perform service unto Him. Psalm 68 is, therefore, typico-prophetic because it pre-figures what the Messiah would do after His ascension. The solution to this hermeneutical problem is solved by understanding the context of the psalm and the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Accepted by the Faculty of Grace Theological Seminary  
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Adviser



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
	Statement of the Problem . . . . .	1
	The Problem of Background . . . . .	2
	The Problem of the Text . . . . .	2
	The Problem of Meanings . . . . .	2
	The Problem of Hermeneutics . . . . .	2
	Presuppositions of the Author . . . . .	2
II.	THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT . . . . .	4
	Authorship . . . . .	4
	Date . . . . .	5
	Unity . . . . .	5
	Outline Structure . . . . .	7
III.	INTERPRETATIONS OF PSALM 68:19 . . . . .	9
IV.	THE STRUCTURE OF EPHESIANS . . . . .	16
	Chiastic Structure Chart . . . . .	17
V.	INTERPRETATION OF EPHESIANS 4:8 . . . . .	19
VI.	PSALM 68:19 IN COMPARISON WITH EPHESIANS 4:8 . . . . .	30
VII.	HERMENEUTICAL SIGNIFICANCE . . . . .	33
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	37

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

The writer can just imagine all of the commentators on the Psalms and Ephesians gathered before the Lord Jesus to contend for the prize of the best exegete. In order to get into the contest, each contestant must have written a lengthy, "dry as dust," commentary on the Psalms or Ephesians or else have constructed an M.Div. thesis at Grace Theological Seminary. Though there was a wide discrepancy in age, all of the contestants came with their pencils sharpened, their language skills refined and their minds prepared for whatever task He might ask. When He announced the text to be exegeted, many of the younger participants, especially those from Winona Lake, started writing furiously, filling countless volumes with their work, while most of the older commentators quietly laid down their pencils, admitted that their skills were not sufficient and that their minds were inadequate to solve the problems. The assignment was to exegete Psalm 68:19 with special emphasis on its use in Ephesians 4:8. This writer falls into the category of one of the younger participants.

### The Problem of Background

Does Paul's background automatically imply that he used the Jewish exegetical methods, that is, a Midrash or a Peshet?

### The Problem of the Text

How do we explain the change from the Hebrew text ('receive') to the Greek text ('gave')?

### The Problem of Meanings

To which place is the ascent of God in each context? Who are the captives being led captive? What are the gifts being received (MT) and given (NT)? Who are the men from whom they are received and to whom they are given?

### The Problem of Hermeneutics

Why and how does Paul use Psalm 68:19? Is there a sensus plenior (a deeper, fuller meaning) here? Is the psalm typical, prophetic or typico-prophetic? Is the variation intentional for theological reasons or unintentional because he was quoting from memory? Is this an illustration, an application, an analogy or a prophetic fulfillment?

### Presuppositions of the Author

Hermeneutically, the New Testament authors' use of the Old Testament should be interpreted with a grammatico-historico-lexico-contextual-authorial emphasis. The best

guide for Biblical doctrine and hermeneutics is the apostles.<sup>1</sup> In defense of this view, Daniel Wallace cites five points:

(1) Doctrinally, our faith would indeed be on shaky ground if the apostles, who learned much of their doctrine (especially about the Messiah) through the Old Testament, employed a faulty hermeneutic to discover about theology. If they are unreliable exegetes, how can they be relied upon as theologians?

(2) Biblically, . . . Luke praised those who examined the validity of Paul's use of the Old Testament in reference to Christ. Acts 17:11 declares: "Now there [that is, the Jews at Berea who were in the process of becoming believers] were more noble minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, [to see] whether these things were so. . . ! This . . . suggests a principle: Luke the inspired writer, considered it a good quality for one to examine how Paul arrived at his theology (i.e., what hermeneutics he used in exegeting the Old Testament).

(3) Practically, it is almost worthless to have an inerrant Word of God, and at the same time, to have a hermeneutical system whose authority rests with men. In other words, if we have a message which comes from God how can we know that we understand it if our method for doing so comes solely from men?

(4) Logically, then, if we have derived the truth of an inerrant Bible from the Scriptures, we should also derive our hermeneutics from the Scriptures. In other words, we should expect the Scriptures to indicate not only what God says, but also what God means (and how to arrive at that meaning).

(5) Pedagogically, the apostles wanted believers not only to know their doctrine, but also how they arrived at it. If they were truly involved in the process of discipleship, as their Lord had commanded them to be (μαθητεύσατε in Matthew 28:19) then they desired their hearers to learn both a message and a method. They would have wanted their hearers to know not only what the Scriptures meant, but also how to discover what they meant.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., "The Use of the Old Testament in the New," Class Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel Wallace, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament," Unpublished Paper, pp. 2-3.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT

#### Authorship

Some scholars believe that because the preposition lamedh is attached to David, that he is not the author, but that someone else wrote it to him, for him or about him.<sup>1</sup> The well known conservative, Roland Harrison, believes that while David did give impetus to poetry in Israel, he is not author of all the psalms with this title formula.<sup>2</sup> Rowley argues that David is the originator of musical arrangements in the temple and a possible author of a few psalms.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Harrison and Rowley credit David with being the inspiration behind, yet not the author of, all psalms with this title formula.

Other conservative authors contend that this title formula is valid testimony of Davidic authorship, especially Clarke and Barnes.<sup>4</sup> They feel that the evidence in the

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<sup>1</sup>Sigmund Mowinckel, The Psalms, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup>Roland Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 983.

<sup>3</sup>Harold Henry Rowley, Worship in Ancient Israel, p. 205.

<sup>4</sup>Arthur Clarke, Analytical Studies in the Psalms, p. 16; Albert Barnes, Notes on the Old Testament Psalms, p. 201.

title is sufficient and there is nothing in the psalm that conflicts with the supposition that David is the author. In view of this internal evidence plus the fact that the Targum and LXX follow the MT, the author agrees that the psalm is Davidic.

### Date

It is impossible to date this psalm from internal evidence, unless the Davidic authorship is accepted. Since the author believes that it is Davidic, the date of composition is during his reign (c. 1050-11 B.C.). Scholars have endlessly attempted to date this psalm from orthographical (namely, words, word-parallels, paleography) and archaeological evidence, but to no avail. The title is the only clear testimony of the authorship.

### Unity

It is disturbing to the author in view of the beautiful theme of Psalm 68 that many commentators do not interpret it as a unit. Bittenweiser divides it into two psalms; Psalm 68B is pre-exilic, while 68A is post-exilic.<sup>1</sup> Peters believes that verses 12-15 contain five titles or headlines of a song.<sup>2</sup> Cassuto saw Psalm 68 as a collection of twenty

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<sup>1</sup>Moses Bittenweiser, The Psalms Chronologically Treated with a New Translation, pp. 29-35.

<sup>2</sup>Albrecht Peters, Notes on Some Difficult Passages in the Old Testament, p. 51.

fragments strung together on the idea of a prayer of trust.<sup>1</sup> Albright said he discerned thirty incipients of poems.<sup>2</sup>

The four main themes seen by commentators are the following: (a) an eschatological hope for man's future (Gunkel); (b) a song of triumph after some great military victory (conservative); (c) a song to celebrate the kingship of God at the covenant festival when God is enthroned (Albright, Mowinckel); (d) a direct prophecy of Christ (Perowne).

The author believes that the purpose of Psalm 68 is to build Israel's confidence in and stimulate her praise of the covenant God. The portrayal of Yahweh is magnificent. Yahweh is seen as the God of Israel (v. 35) and the Lord of all the nations (vv. 32-35). He is the God of fearsome judgment (vv. 2, 3, 7c, 22, 24, 31) and of tenderest mercies (vv. 7, 10, 11, 20, 21, 35). The psalm spreads from a nationalistic relationship with Israel (vv. 2-19) to include the whole world (vv. 19, 30, 32, 33-36). Finally, but very importantly, though the heavens and earth shake by His very presence with His people (8). He also enters into a covenant relationship with His chosen people (9).

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<sup>1</sup>Umberto Cassuto, "Psalm 68," Journal of Near East Literature (1940):1-27.

<sup>2</sup>William Foxwell Albright, "A Catalogue of Early Hebrew Lyric Poems (Psalm 68)," p. 9.

The view that the psalm is not a unity has a major weakness. Why would the psalm catalogue such a long list of incipients and how could the psalm survive without a function? Albright's view that the ancient editors tried to rescue this ancient hymn from oblivion is unacceptable. He has missed the unity and theme of the psalm!

### Outline Structure

The Psalm can be divided into three sections:

(1) 1-18 reminisces concerning Yahweh's triumphs in the past; (2) 19-35 reveals His greatness and Israel's expectant confidence in future triumphs. Taking a more analytical approach in 1-6, David calls upon the righteous to praise the God whose covenant blesses Israel and routs the enemies; in 8-18, David confidently reviews God's victorious presence with Israel throughout her history from the wilderness wanderings to the kingship of David; in 19-23, David calls on Israel to praise God because He will punish His enemies; in 24-27, David remembers the procession of God into His sanctuary; in 28-31 David expresses confidence that God will eventually bring the heathen to submit to Him; in 32-35, David summons all the kingdoms to praise God.

More specifically, verse 16 describes the opposition to God's kingdom symbolically as the mountains of Bashan. Verse 17 affirms that their opposition is fruitless because Yahweh's purposes cannot be thwarted. Verse 18 describes



God's heavenly army to build Israel's confidence, even as the servant of Elisha's confidence was strengthened. Verse 19 describes God's ascension on Mt. Zion and His reception of gifts in the form of Levitical priests from the nation of Israel.

### CHAPTER III

#### INTERPRETATIONS OF PSALM 68:19

Various interpretations of this עליה למרום have been given: (1) Kissane believes it is God's ascension into heaven;<sup>1</sup> (2) Ridderbos thinks it is the ascension of the ark into the sanctuary in Zion;<sup>2</sup> (3) Mowinckel theorizes that the phrase indicates the termination of the literal cultic procession;<sup>3</sup> (4) Zolli relates it to the route of the victorious Israelite campaign between Lake Merom and the two on the Jordan;<sup>4</sup> (5) Bush and Suhn see it as the triumph and glorious victory of Yahweh.<sup>5</sup>

The two views that will be discussed at length will be numbers five and two. Bush and Suhn see עליה למרום as referring to a great military victory like the one over Sennacherib (Isa 37:24). E. J. Young comments on the Isaiah verse:

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<sup>1</sup>Edward J. Kissane, The Book of the Psalms, vol. 1, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup>Herman Nicolaas Ridderbos, De Psalmen Vertald en Verklad, vol. 2, p. 193.

<sup>3</sup>Sigmund Mowinckel, Der Achtundsechzigste, p. 46.

<sup>4</sup>Edward Zolli, "Uwagi De Psalm 68," Ruth Bubligny Liturgicnoy 9 (1956):32-33.

<sup>5</sup>Bernhard Duhm, "Triumphant hast du," p. 177.

What does he have in mind? He himself does not ascend the heights of the Lebanese mountains with chariots . . . rather . . . the Spirit of Assyria is set forth . . . that it can conquer all things. Lebanon stands for the highest and most inaccessible of all places; evidently the term is used to cover all the western coast lands; and in this sense it may be said to be figurative. Sennacherib is boasting that he has taken the western lands and that no obstacle is too great for his power and might.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore the context speaks of a conflict between the Lord's enemies (16, 17) and His military invincibility (18). If the enemies are likened to mountains, the phrase could mean: "You have conquered great enemies likened unto mountains." The tense of the verb is the simple perfect tense to describe God's recent victory over the opposition.

The second view contends that militaristic language is a frequent metaphor and its use here in no way diminishes the historicity of events, rather based on them, evinces the sovereign prerogative of God to dwell among His people.<sup>2</sup> Some would argue that למרום refers to Mt. Sinai, because in its context in the strophe (15-18), v. 17 identifies הר-בשר in v. 16 as סיני.<sup>3</sup> But this requires textual emendation. It is better to follow the בם סיני and supplying the

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<sup>1</sup>Edward Joseph Young, The Book of Isaiah, vol. 2, p. 491.

<sup>2</sup>Randy Price, "Paul's Use of Ps. 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8" (Unpublished paper, DTS, 1976), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Gregory Kimball Beale, "The Use of Psalm 68 in Ephesians 4:8" (Unpublished paper, DTS, 1974), p. 6.

comparative sense, rendering it, "as at Sinai."<sup>1</sup> This then would have the mountains of Basham envious of Mt. Zion because, as at Sinai, the Lord dwells among them in holiness. The event of the exodus, where Israel learned about salvation of their sovereign God, is important here. God is to be praised then and here for going before His people.

The question of whether עליה למרום should be taken literally as a military victory or metaphorically as the sovereign prerogative of God to dwell among them must ultimately be solved on contextual grounds. In view of the theme of the psalm, namely, to build Israel's confidence in and stimulate her praise of God, and of Yahweh's movement to His sanctuary, these are grounds for adopting the view that the language is metaphorical.

The second clause, שביית שבי, has been greatly debated: (1) the AV translates it "Thou hast led captivity captive"; (2) some believe the captives to be the godly dead in a special compartment of Hades-Sheol;<sup>2</sup> (3) others feel it means "to display prisoners publicly";<sup>3</sup> (4) others interpret the clause "to take booty";<sup>4</sup> (5) others feel that these

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<sup>1</sup>Randall Price, *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Thiessen, *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, pp. 488-89; L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 5, pp. 268-73.

<sup>3</sup>John James Perowne, *Psalms*, vol. 1, p. 529.

<sup>4</sup>Umberto Cassuto, "Psalm 68," *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, vol. 1, 1971, p. 265.

prisoners are literal prisoners of war.<sup>1</sup> The fifth position is perhaps the majority conservative view. Its proponents argue that though God's program of holy war dictated a policy of extermination against the Canaanites (Deut 20:16-18), Israel could enter into treaties with non-Canaanites. Israel, if she defeated a city, would gain access to the spoil and the enemies would become vassals.

John Randall Price has proposed a better solution.<sup>2</sup> He believes that God's stay at His sanctuary is preceded by His ascension and the taking captive. The מַחְנֹתָה (gifts) received made it possible for God to remain in His sanctuary among His rebellious people. It is best to take this metaphorically as Israelites whom God captured for Himself. These captives are the סֹרְרִים ('rebellious') mentioned in 19c and also the gifts God received. This fits nicely because Israel was rebellious throughout much of her history. Also, these gifts were responsible for God's continuing stay. These Israelites were most likely the Levites. Numbers 8 tells us that the Levites were separated among the sons of Israel (14). They were presented as a wave offering before the Lord to perform the service of the Lord (11), and they were to make atonement on behalf of the

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<sup>1</sup>Nathaniel Bush, "A Critical and Exegetical Study of Psalm 68" (Th.D. dissertation, DTS) 1980, p. 205.

<sup>2</sup>Randall Price, "Paul's Use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8," p. 10.

sons of Israel (19). In 2 Chronicles 7:19-20 Yahweh promised to uproot Israel and destroy the Temple if the people turned away from Him, worshipped other gods and the priests ceased their function of intercession. Though the blood of goats and calves can never expiate sin, God required these sacrifices of Israel. God required perfect obedience from Israel. But when they did sin, the priest was required to make an offering. The Levites were to assist the priest in these offerings.

The Levites came into prominence when they avenged the Lord's honor by punishing many of the Israelites worshipping the golden calf (Exod 32:25ff.). This display of fidelity may have caused God to separate the Levites from the other tribes and to place them in charge of dismantling, carrying and erecting the tabernacle out in the wilderness (Num 1:47-54). The sons of Levi camped around the tabernacle and served as buffers to protect their fellow tribes from God's wrath (Num 1:51, 53; 2:17). The Levites not only were dedicated to the manual care of the tabernacle, but they performed an important service for the other tribes by substituting for each family's firstborn, to whom God was entitled after He spared Israel's firstborn in the Passover (Exod 13:2ff.). They were substitutes, therefore, of the firstborn child in the ministry of the tabernacle and later in the Temple. They certainly were received as gifts by God. During the monarchy, in addition to their regular

tasks as singers, musicians, gatekeepers and porters, the Levites helped in the actual preparation of sacrifices, as well as in the care of the courts and chambers, the cleansing of the holy things and the preparation of the showbread, the cereal offering, the unleavened bread (1 Chr 23:14).<sup>1</sup>

David's orders in 1 Chronicles 23 illustrate the two dominant factors which produced substantial changes in the Levitical offices: the permanent location of the ark in Jerusalem (Zion), which automatically made obsolete all the regulations concerning the Levite's function as porters; and the centralization of responsibility for the official religion. The Hebrew view of corporate personality saw the king as the great father of the nation whose essential character was derived from him. The Levites did not turn aside from what David told them (1 Chr 8:15).

The identification of מַחֲנֹנִת in the phrase לַפְּקִסָּה מַחֲנֹנִת depends on the rendering of מִבְּאֵדָם. Though it is possible to take כּ in Hebrew and Ugaritic as "from," it is best to take it as a partitive and translate the phrase, "you received gifts among (some) men."<sup>2</sup> The identification of these certain men is the Levites--these men taken captive

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<sup>1</sup>David Allan Hubbard, The New Bible Dictionary, p. 1030.

<sup>2</sup>Randall Price, "Paul's Use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8," p. 13.

to do service. They are synonymous with those who give him gifts. If these gifts were merely tribute from Israel's defeated enemies, Yahweh could not continue on high. But if these gifts are the Levites, their responsibilities of performing services, and making sacrifices could influence Yahweh to remain.

Further, if the phrase is seen as a metonymy of effect for cause, the effect of God receiving gifts among men is substituted for its cause, God first giving those gifts to men, the gift-giver and the gift given are the same, namely, the exercise of the gift as consecrated service to God.<sup>1</sup> The captives are synonymous with the gifts, for captives are taken and gifts given, both refer to the Levites. If we take the ל of לַשָּׁכַב as an infinitive of purpose, God's decision to dwell among His people is based on the function of Levites from whom He took among the rebellious nation.<sup>2</sup>

This interpretation is best because it fits into the context, it shows the unity, it is simple, it avoids textual emendation and it harmonizes with the theme.

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<sup>1</sup>Ethelbert William Bullinger, Figures of Speech in the Bible (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), p. 564.

<sup>2</sup>Randall Price, "Paul's Use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8," p. 13.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE STRUCTURE OF EPHESIANS

The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians brims with deep conviction expressed primarily in terms, not of argument and polemic, but of adoration.<sup>1</sup> The theology of this letter is not merely academic; it flows out of a heart of worship on a bended knee. Dahl has said that listening rightly to Ephesians is not simply interpreting its theological content but hearing how its affirmations are made.<sup>2</sup> One should take note of the prayers that are uttered in Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ."; in Ephesians 1:16, ". . . [I] do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers . . ."; and in Ephesians 3:14, "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father." Paul's heart is bursting with praise to God and supplication on behalf of the Ephesian church.

The focus of this letter is telescopic, moving in an ever narrowing field of view from the cosmic, to the corporate, and finally to the individual. The overall movement

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<sup>1</sup>Bruce Corley, "The Theology of Ephesians," Southwestern Journal of Theology 22 (Fall 1979):24.

<sup>2</sup>Nils A. Dahl, "Interpreting Ephesians: Then and Now," Currents in Theology and Mission 5 (June 1978):143.

begins with a cosmic depiction of God's plan, a picture taken with a wide angle lens, in which the unification of the Jew and Gentile portends the consummation of all things (1:3-2:22). Then the church as the revelatory agent in the heavens and the earth comes into view (3:1-4:22). Then the vision narrows to the primary sub-unit of the community, the household and family (4:22-6:9). The final picture is that of an individual, a Christian warrior fully armed with the armor of God (6:10-20).<sup>1</sup>

The main exegetical idea of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians is that the Church is to be characterized by spiritual unity and mutual edification rather than satanically-inspired self-centeredness. There may be a chiastic structure to the book. This is given below.

#### Chiastic Structure in Ephesians<sup>2</sup>

A	(2:2)	Our former relation to Satan.
B	(2:3)	Our former relation to unbelievers.
C	(2:1-10)	Our former relation to God with reference to individual salvation.
D	(2:11-22)	The Gentiles' new, organic relation to the Jews as being equal in the corporate body.
E	(2:20-22)	The Apostles' foundational relation to this new body.

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<sup>1</sup>Corley, "The Theology of Ephesians," p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel Wallace, "New Testament Exegetical Methods," Class handout.

- E (3:2-13) The Apostles' antecedent relation to this new body, that is, the mystery was given to them.
- D (4:1-16) The Gentiles' new, functional relation to the Jews with reference to the corporate goal of the body.
- C (4:17-5:21) Our present relation to God with reference to sanctification--the means by which the corporate body's goal is individually accomplished.
- B (4:17-5:21) Our present relation to unbelievers.
- A (6:10-17) Our present relation to Satan and evil forces.

## CHAPTER V

### INTERPRETATION OF EPHESIANS 4:8

In Ephesians 4:7-16, Paul explains the purpose for Christ giving specially gifted men to the church is to equip the individual saints to carry out the ministry given to them by Christ and to effect doctrinal maturity and functional stability so that saints may then carry on the task of mutual edification.

Ephesians 4:7 reads, 'Ενὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. There has been much discussion about the meaning of χάρις. Ruiz believes that χάρις is the grace that saves.<sup>1</sup> Ellicott views χάρις as the energizing grace which manifests itself in the particular gift.<sup>2</sup> Fowlkes understands χάρις to refer to spiritual gifts and equates χάρις with χαρίσματα.<sup>3</sup>

In view of the context of Ephesians 4:7-16, χάρις does not refer to the grace that saves. Rather the writer

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<sup>1</sup>Jose Ruiz, "Los Logos de Unidad En Ef. 4:1-16," Semana Biblica Espana 15 (April, 1977):269, 275.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Ellicott, A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians and Ephesians (Andover: Wm. F. Draper, 1864), p. 88.

<sup>3</sup>F. Fowlkes, The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries.

believes that χάρις refers to the grace that equips the individual saints to carry out the ministry given to them by Christ. Paul was a recipient of God's grace after his conversion (Rom 15:15; 1 Cor 3:10); in fact, his apostolic office was given to him by grace (Rom 1:5) and, the discharge of his duties was by grace (2 Cor 1:12). Paul had received grace from the Lord in order to carry out his ministry of reconciliation and edification in the world.

The election of Paul and the rest of the church can be traced to the grace and will of God (Eph 1:4; Gal 1:15). Even before the physical creation, God set His heart on the elect and has drawn them to Himself. His grace, therefore, extended to His elect is irresistible (John 6:44). George Caird suggests that election is compounded of three convictions: "that salvation is from the first to last the act of God's free choice, and not of man's own achievement, that it is not merely the repairing of damage done by sin, but the fulfillment of God's original purpose for man; and that it involves appointment to a role in which the responsibilities are at least as large as the privileges."<sup>1</sup>

Grace not only brings a person to salvation, but also assigns the elect special tasks in the service of God. These special tasks are in view in Ephesians 4:7. By the grace of God, Paul was appointed and commissioned as an

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<sup>1</sup>George Caird, Ephesians, p. 32.

apostle. There was nothing in him that made him worthy of receiving this gift. Paul was a persecutor of the church when he met the Lord on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:4). Ananias had heard of the harm that Saul had done to the saints at Jerusalem and he did not want to lay his hands on a man who had authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on the name of the Lord (Acts 9:11-14). But the Lord reassured Ananias that Saul was a chosen vessel of His and that his task was to bear His name before the Gentiles and kings and sons of Israel (Acts 9:15). God had chosen Saul, a Pharisaic zealot, to preach the gospel. In order to accomplish the mission given to him by God, he was supplied grace (1 Cor 15:9, 10; Rom 1:5; 1 Cor 3:10; Gal 2:9; Eph 2:7). With his spiritual endowment, the former persecutor became a powerful preacher.

Not only was grace given to Paul but each member of the body of Christ is given grace. The amount of grace given, however, varies from individual to individual. Each one of us has been given grace, κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The preposition κατὰ with an accusative indicates a norm or standard.<sup>1</sup> The measurement of the gift depends on how much the Giver, the glorified Christ, gives. The amount of grace given to each person is distributed

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<sup>1</sup>A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, by W. Bauer, edited by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, revised by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1978), p. 407.

individually and sovereignly. These gifts are individual in the sense that they are given personally. They are given sovereignly in that God gives gifts to men in order to accomplish His work and plan. The gifts, then, will vary from individual to individual; yet they will all work together to bring about God's purposes.

Lenski argues that τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ is an objective genitive, viewing Christ as the recipient rather than the Giver of the gifts. The endowment given to each member of the church is in accord with the measure of the gift bestowed upon Christ. He believes that each believer is given the same measure of grace as the Father bestowed on the Son.<sup>1</sup> The writer believes that τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ is a subjective genitive, and should be translated the gift of Christ. The gift is measured. While each individual receives, he receives according to the will of the Sovereign Distributor.<sup>2</sup> All of the gifts given, whether they be large or small, are indispensable to the unity and edification of the body. Each gift in its own place completes the unity and builds up the body.

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<sup>1</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians and to the Ephesians and to the Philippians (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1946), p. 517.

<sup>2</sup>John Eadie, Ephesians (London: T. & T. Clark, 1883), p. 280.

Some authors draw a distinction between the gifts given by the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 and the gifted men given to the church in Ephesians 4. The evidence, however, argues against any difference between the gifts of the Spirit and the gifted men of the ascended Christ. Most notably Paul includes spiritual gifts and gifted men in his lists in 1 Corinthians 12:28-30 and Romans 12:6-8. Even Ephesians 4:7-11 makes no distinction between the gifts and the gifted men. The passage teaches that not only have gifted men been given (v. 11) but that gifts have been given unto men (v. 8). The gifts of the Spirit may even be thought of as the gifts of the exalted Christ, since Christ gave the Holy Spirit to the church (Acts 2:30) and all three members of the Trinity function in the dispersal of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:7; Eph 4:8; 1 Pet 4:10-11).

Paul expands the idea of Christ giving gifts to the church in Ephesians 4:8: διὸ λέγει, Ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἡχμαλ-ώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. The first word of this verse is διὸ and is an inferential conjunction. It means wherefore or on which account. Paul is saying that verse 8 is an inference, based on what was said in verse 7. The connection between verses 7 and 8 is the idea that the glorified Christ gives gifts to His church (John 7:39; Acts 2:33; 5:31, 32). Verse 7 makes the general statement that to each one of us grace was given. Verse 8 tells us when and how this grace was given. It is an explanatory verse



that has been taken out of context often by commentators. But if we remember the main exegetical idea is that Christ has specially gifted men to equip others to carry out the ministry, then we shall not fall into error.

Λέγει can be translated 'it says,' 'He says,' or 'Scripture says.'<sup>1</sup> Occasionally Paul does not name the subject of λέγει when introducing a quote from the Old Testament (Rom 15:10; 2 Cor 6:2; Gal 3:16; Eph 4:8). The writer believes that Paul had a strong belief in the authority of the Old Testament; that is to say, God's words were contained therein. The use of λέγει in Ephesians 5:14 poses a problem, however. Although λέγει introduces a quote, it is probably not taken from the Old Testament. Rather it may be a quote of an early Christian creedal hymn. If so, the apostles might have considered their own creeds and statements as from God. In Ephesians 4:8, the point is that Paul assumes, rather than defends, written apostolic authority.<sup>2</sup>

Τῆς γῆς is usually taken as a partitive genitive. Some understand this to mean that Christ descended into the underworld.<sup>3</sup> However, it may well be a genitive of

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<sup>1</sup>A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Early Christian Literature, by W. Bauer, edited by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, revised by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1978), p. 468.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel B. Wallace, "Selected Notes on the Syntax of New Testament Greek," 4th edition, Grace Theological Seminary, 1981, p. 191.

<sup>3</sup>Maximilian Zerwick, Biblical Greek, p. 17.

apposition: He descended into the lower parts (of the universe) that is, the earth. Zerwick finds other occurrences of where the substantive added in the genitive is in reality an apposition denoting the same person or thing as the substantive to which the genitive is attached (Matt 12:39; John 8:44; Acts 2:38; 2 Cor 1:22; Col 1:18; Rom 5:18; Rev 2:10; 14:18).<sup>1</sup> Wallace comments that it is a common idiom for a singular genitive of apposition to be related to μέρη (plural)--cf. Isaiah 9:1 (LXX); Matthew 2:22.<sup>2</sup> The translation of ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς τὰ μέρη τῆς Γαλιλαίας might be "he departed for the regions [of Israel] namely, Galilee," or "he departed for the regions which constitute Galilee."<sup>3</sup>

Ἀναβᾶς εἰς ὕψος is a direct reference to the ascension of Christ into heaven. Paul states this fact to draw a contrast between his Lord and the goddess of the Ephesians. She was the goddess of the moon and she supposedly ascended to the world of the gods and descended back to earth.<sup>4</sup> Her temple at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world and her worship was connected with a fertility cult of the mother goddess of Asia Minor.<sup>5</sup> Evidently

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel B. Wallace, "Selected Notes on the Syntax of New Testament Greek," p. 191.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>The New Bible Dictionary, edited by James Dixon Douglas (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 311.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

thousands of Eunuch priests, Essene servants and female slaves served Diana at the temple under rigid rules of purity and abstinence.<sup>1</sup> The women were not prostitutes as was the case in nearly all the other cults of the Great Mother of Anatolia.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus, in contrast to Diana, has ascended into heaven (cf. Acts 2:33; Heb 9:24; 1 Pet 3:22). Hebrews 10:12 tells us that He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God. Unlike the Aaronic priests who continually offered sacrifices at the altar and did not sit down, Jesus has completed His atoning work for all time and has sat down.<sup>3</sup> The sacrifices offered by the Aaronic priests could not remove sin or cleanse the conscience. The sacrifice offered by Jesus was perfect and could redeem and sanctify men. The right hand of God is a place of exaltation.<sup>4</sup> From the humiliation and shame of the cross, Christ has been exalted to the place of highest honor. He is now interceding for His people (Heb 7:25) and waiting until His enemies are subdued (Heb 10:13; 1 Cor 15:24-26). We now have access to and acceptance

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 242.

<sup>3</sup>F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 238.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

before God. To all who are uncertain of their acceptance before God comes the voice of John Bunyan: "Sinner, thou thinkest that because of thy sins my Son is by me, and upon him I look, and not on thee and will deal with thee according as I am pleased with Him."<sup>1</sup>

Ἡχμαλώτευσεν is an aorist verb with its cognate accusative αἰχμαλωσίαν appearing in the same sentence. It should be translated "He led captivity captive." Hodge believes this means that Christ conquered His enemies (sin, Satan and death) at the cross and then subjugated them to Himself.<sup>2</sup> The implication is that sin is defeated, Satan is bound and death is overcome; in other words, the kingdom age has arrived. The writer agrees that Jesus has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col 1:13), yet believers are merely heirs of the Kingdom to come (Matt 6:10; Eph 1:14; Jas 2:5). We have been promised a place in His Kingdom and should preach about the Kingdom, but we shall not be in the Kingdom until the Second Coming and the mediatorial reign of Christ.

As mentioned in the section dealing with the structure of Ephesians, the first ten verses of chapter two of

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<sup>1</sup>John Bunyan, Grace Abounding, p. 258.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Hodge, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1856), p. 214.

Ephesians discuss our former relation to God, Satan and unbelievers. Ephesians 2:1-3 is especially important to review if we are to understand this verse. With respect to God, we once were dead in our trespasses and sin. There is no spiritual life in an unregenerate man; he is spiritually dead (2:1). With respect to Satan, we once walked according to the course of this world (2:2). With respect to sin, we once lived in the lusts of our flesh and were by nature children of wrath (2:3). We were once in total slavery to Satan and to our own sinful natures, inherited from our federal head, Adam.

But even when we were dead in our transgressions, Ephesians 2:5 tells us that God made us alive together with Christ. It is His sovereign grace that convicts, draws and regenerates. God has not only made us alive in Christ, but He has equipped us with gifts. Even as God took the Levites captive in the Old Testament to do His will and to perform spiritual service, so He has taken the church captive. The rebellious people have no will or strength within themselves to influence God's choice of them apart from the imputation of His grace that set them free and the impartation of His gifts that enabled them to do service. Having once been held captive by Satan and sinful nature to do its will (2 Tim 2:26), Jesus has been sent to proclaim release to the captives (Luke 4:18). Christ has given gifted men to the church so that they might equip saints for

the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ (Eph 4:12). These Christians, having been taught the doctrines of the faith, having been equipped to perform the work of service, having been edified in the body of Christ, will attain to the unity of the faith and will be able to discern the trickery of men and the schemes of the devil (Eph 4:13, 14).

Ephesians 2:11-22 spoke of the Gentiles' new organic relation to the Jews as being equal in the corporate body. Christ has broken down the dividing wall and made the two groups into one, thus establishing peace (Eph 2:14, 15). This organic relationship made possible through the cross (Eph 2:16) does not become a functional relationship unless the gifted persons in the church employ their gifts. These gifted persons are to continue to equip the saints and build up the body until we attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to a measure of the stature which belongs to Christ (Eph 4:13). The only way to reach unity and maturity is for gifted men to impart their lives and knowledge to the saints.

## CHAPTER VI

### PSALM 68:19 IN COMPARISON WITH EPHESIANS 4:8

<u>MT</u>	<u>LXX</u>	<u>Eph 4:8</u>	<u>Targum</u>
תליע	ἀνεβης	Ἀναβᾶς	מלקח
למרומ	εἰς ὕψος	εἰς ὕψος	ירקלע
שבתי	ἡχμαλώτευσας	ἡχμαλώτευσεν	שבתי
שבי	αἰχμαλωσίαν	αἰχμαλωσίαν	שבתי
תקל	ἔλαβες	ἔδωκεν	תקל
תוסת	δόματα	δόματα	תוסת
בארם	ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ	τοῖς ἀνθρώποις	לכני נשא

#### Textual Variations Noted

The LXX and the MT are in agreement with each other. The Targum agrees with Ephesians 4:8 in the crucial readings of ἔδωκεν and τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, but differs in its additions to the text. The greatest difference between the LXX and the NT are: (1) the Ἀναβᾶς in the NT instead of ἀνεβης in the LXX; (2) the change from the second person singular of αἰχμαλώτευσεν (LXX) to the third person singular (NT); (3) the use of τοῖς ἀνθρώποις (NT) instead of ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ (LXX); (4) the use of ἔδωκεν (NT) instead of ἔλαβες (LXX). The major textual variant with which this paper will deal is ἔδωκεν, because the others do not change the main idea.

Many attempts have been made to attempt to solve the problem: (1) some do not consider this a problem, but see "the giving" presupposing the taking and the taking succeeded by "the giving" as its consequence, finding their meanings identical;<sup>1</sup> (2) others claim that תָּקַח has a proleptic meaning of taking for the purpose of giving;<sup>2</sup> (3) others do not see the thought of God receiving gifts as consistent with His character and so apply a pesher convention, claiming that the letters תָּקַח were rearranged to קָחָה;<sup>3</sup> (4) others believe that Paul used the Peshitta and Targum and followed a midrashic interpretation.<sup>4</sup>

The writer does not think that any of these solutions will fit the context. The first two solutions, offered by Hengstenberg and Eadie respectively, are semantical gymnastics which evade the problem of the textual change from ἔλαβες (LXX) to ἔδωκεν (NT). The third solution, offered by Abbott, has a root fallacy in the fact that God's

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<sup>1</sup>E. W. Hengstenberg, "Commentary on the Psalms," Vol. 2 in The Works of Hengstenberg (Cherry Hill: Mack Publishing Co., 1855), p. 335.

<sup>2</sup>John Eadie, A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1883), p. 282.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), p. 111.

<sup>4</sup>R. Rubinkiewicz, "Psalm 68:19 (= Eph. 4:8), Another Textual Tradition or Targum?", Novum Testamentum, vol. 17, Fasc. 3, p. 220.



character does not preclude His reception of gifts. The entire levitical sacrificial system was based on a gift (offering) to the Lord. The fourth solution, offered by Rubinkiewicz, does not solve the problem. The writer does not believe that Paul was using the Peshitta and Targum. Rather he believes that Paul deliberately altered the LXX to suit his authorial intent. The solution offered by the writer is given in the next section.

## CHAPTER VII

### HERMENEUTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Why does Paul change the Hebrew reading "receive" in Psalm 68:19 to the Greek "gave" in Ephesians 4:8? This is a central question to unlocking the hermeneutics of the Apostle Paul in this verse. Longenecker thinks that Paul departed from the meaning of Psalm 68:19 to employ Midrashic exegesis as his hermeneutical procedure.<sup>1</sup> Midrashic exegesis departs from the Biblical text to explicate hidden meanings in order to contemporize revelation for the people of God.<sup>2</sup> One of the presuppositions of the writer is that New Testament writers, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, could perceive the intended meaning behind prophecies or could make analogies with the Old Testament text. But in this case, Paul does not go beyond the literal, authorial sense to arrive at some deeper, hidden meaning outside of the text.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Richard H. Longenecker, Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), pp. 124-25.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-48.

<sup>3</sup>Randall Price, "Paul's Use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8," p. 20.

The writer does not believe that Paul applied a pesher convention in this case either. A pesher convention, as found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, is the idea of explicit fulfillment.<sup>1</sup> Seerfried has said that sixty-three percent of the Old Testament verses quoted in the New Testament fall into the category of either a fulfillment (pesher) or an application.<sup>2</sup> Most of the pesher convention verses are found in the Gospels, especially in the Book of John, where the Apostle John quotes the spoken words of Jesus in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.<sup>3</sup>

Ephesians 4:8 is an analogy drawn from Psalm 68:19. It is not a midrash (contemporization) or pesher (fulfillment). Paul's awareness of the word δόματα in Psalm 68:19 apparently caused him to use the verse as proof of his statement in Ephesians 4:7.<sup>4</sup> Paul quotes the Old Testament passage in Ephesians 4:8, equating the work of God in the Old Testament with His work in the New Testament. In fact, the very same Person who appeared to Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Joshua in the Old Testament, was the

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<sup>1</sup>Krester Standahl, The School of Matthew, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup>Richard Seerfried, "The Use of the Old Testament Quotations in the New," Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1980, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Gary Smith, "Paul's Use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, Vol. 18, No. 3, p. 182.

preincarnate Christ. He was responsible for giving instruction and leadership to Israel. In the New Testament, Jesus ascended into heaven after He had completed His work of redemption on the earth. From heaven He is able to dispense gifts through the Person of the Holy Spirit according to the measure of His grace. The Master is sovereign to bestow the energizing grace which manifests itself in the particular gift of each believer.

In making an analogy between Christ's preincarnate work in the Old Testament and His post-resurrection work, this psalm is typico-prophetic, for Paul has used it in an indirectly prophetic sense, typologically prefiguring that which was to take place in regard to the future Messiah. The exegetical principle demonstrated by Paul is verbal analogy, which is at the heart of poetry and prophetic. An analogy draws a relation between something old and new and expresses the new on the basis of the known.

Even as the formerly rebellious ones were received by God as gifts in the Old Testament, God has given the formerly rebellious ones gifts in the New Testament to perform spiritual ministry. The analogy of Psalm 68 here depicts Yahweh (Christ), having ascended to Mount Zion (God the Father's presence), capturing the Levites (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers) and then giving them to the nation (Church). So God chose a special group of men to be both gift and giver of gifts. Levites and New

Testament teachers were ordained to perform God's work on earth.









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