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# The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON LXXII : UNITY AND DIVERSITY WITHIN THE CONGREGATION OF BELIEVERS (4:1-16)

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## **Ephesians 4:7~10 —**

*Vnto every one of vs is geuen grace acordinge to the measure of the gyft of christ. Wherefore he sayth: He is gone vp an hie and hath ledde captivitie captive and hath geuen gyftes vnto men. That he ascended: what meaneth it but that he also descended fyrst into the lowest parties of the erth? He that descended is even the same also that ascended vp even above all hevens to fulfill all thinges.* (Tyndale's New Testament, 1524)

*But vnto euery one of vs is giuen grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, Whe he asceded vp on hie, he led captiuitie captiue, and gaue gifts vnto men. (Nowe, in that hee ascended, what is it but that he had also descended first into the lowest partes of the earth? Hee that descended, is euen the same that ascended, farre above all heauens, that hee might fill all things)* (Geneva Bible, 1599)

*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)* (King James Version, 1769)

*and to each one of you was given the grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ, wherefore, he saith, 'Having gone up on high he led captive captivity, and gave gifts to men,' — and that, he went up, what is it except that he also went down first to the lower parts of the earth? he who went down is the same also who went up far above all the heavens, that He may fill all things —* (Young's Literal Translation, 1898)

*But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men. (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)* (Revised Version, 1885)

*But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, And gave gifts unto men. (Now this, He ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)* (American Standard Version, 1901)

*But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)* (Revised Standard Version, 1952)

*But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended" — what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)* (New King James Version, 1982)

*But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.)* (New American Standard Version, 1995)

*But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people." (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)* (New International Version, 2011)

*But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)* (English Standard Version, 2011)

Ἐνὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ διὸ λέγει Ἄναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν καὶ ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὸ δὲ Ἄνέβη τί ἐστὶν εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη πρῶτον εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς ὁ καταβὰς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα (Stephanus Greek NT, 1550)

Ἐνὶ δὲ ἑκάστῳ ἡμῶν ἐδόθη ἡ χάρις κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς δωρεᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ. διὸ λέγει· ἀναβὰς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν

αἰχμαλωσίαν, ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. τὸ δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα [μέρη] τῆς γῆς; ὁ καταβάς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβάς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα. (NA28 Greek New Testament)

**RECOMMENDED RESOURCE** — I again give reference to the resource I mentioned last week: **E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* [Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene OR] 1981.**

**V. 8** — **‘Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.”’ (NKJV) – ‘Therefore it says, “When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.”’ (ESV)** — διὸ λέγει Ἀναβάς εἰς ὕψος ἠχμαλώτευσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν καὶ ἔδωκεν δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις [dio legei Anabas eis hupsos echmalōteusen aichmalōsian kai edōken domata tois anthrōpois] — Paul brings forth an OT quote to support his thesis of the exulted Christ having the authority to give gifts to His people. This is generally accepted by all; the problems begin however when one looks to the details. Let us compare what Paul quotes with the original quote in the Psalms 68:18 (*note: due to chapter and verse numbering differences, this verse Ps 68:18 in our English version is 68:19 in the Hebrew MT Old Testament and 67:19 in the LXX*):

Psalm 68:18 YLT	Eph 4:8 YLT
<i>Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast taken captive captivity, Thou hast taken gifts for men (lit., ‘in or among man’)</i>	<i>Having gone up on high he led captive captivity, and gave gifts to men</i>

Bible students state the LXX in this instance accurately translates the Hebrew [Hoehner, 524; Thielman, 265] so for the sake of today’s lesson we will only consider the LXX translation. But whether from the Hebrew MT or the Greek LXX, even a cursory reading reveals several discrepancies in Paul’s quote. Harold Hoehner lists six differences, most very minor and irrelevant to our discussion:

- Paul changes from ‘you have gone up, you have ascended’ (finite verb, ἀνέβης, anebēs) in the LXX to ‘having gone up’ (participle, ἀναβάς, anabas).
- Paul changes from the singular ‘man, mankind’ (ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ, en anthrōpō) in the LXX to the plural, ‘men, human beings’ (τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, tois anthrōpois) in his quote.
- in making the change from ‘man, mankind’ (singular) to ‘men, human beings’ (plural) Paul first leaves out a preposition used in the LXX and then secondly adds a definite article.

Minor modifications while quoting the OT is common and if these were the only differences, no one would be making an issue of Paul’s quote. There are however two changes which are not so minor:

- Paul changes both verbs from second person singular (ἠχμαλώτευσας, echmalōteusas, ‘you capture, you lead captive’ and ἔλαβες, elabes, ‘you take’) to third person singular (ἠχμαλώτευσεν, echmalōteusen, ‘he captured, he led captive’ and ἔδωκεν, edōken, ‘he gave’).
- as can be seen in the previous comment, Paul also changes the action of the last verb from ‘receiving, taking’ to ‘giving’.

**“Although the quotation itself resembles Ps. 68:18, it differs from that text in such important ways that some scholars think Paul is not quoting Scripture at all (cf. 5:14).”** [Thielman, 264f]

**EXPLANATIONS AS TO THE VARIATIONS IN PAUL’S QUOTE** — There have been a great many explanations set forth as to why Paul so mis-quoted the Psalmist.

- **‘DO NOT QUESTION INSPIRATION’** — Some take refuge in the apostolic authority of Paul and relegate it to ‘an inspired alteration’ (‘since it appears in the NT and the NT is scripture, it must be scripture!’). While this is not to be denied, I believe it worthwhile to evaluate the evidence and modify our thinking as necessary. I do not believe it worthwhile to ignore facts as if with our fingers in our ears and we are singing ‘la-la-la-la-la ... I cannot hear you!’ **Question: is the Word of God inspired by God or not? If it is, then we should not be afraid to look at some of these harder questions! We may not always come to an answer but as mentioned last week, the Word of God is perfect, we are not! But study, pray, look into the Scriptures and try to see more about how the Holy Spirit worked through these men to write the Scriptures. Never waver on the fact of inspiration but be able and willing to grow with how it was done!**

Having said that, I want to remind us we are looking at a question that has baffled *true* Bible scholars for centuries (‘true’ in contrast with liberal scholars who attack the Word of God). I do not expect us to come to an answer this morning but do want us to be aware of the difficulties involved in Paul’s quote.

- **PAUL HAD A LAPSE IN MEMORY** — Hardly worth mentioning but some older commentators did suggest Paul was quoting from memory and simply had a memory lapse. But the changes are much too deliberate and striking to

appear to be a memory lapse. As we will see below, there are also other ancient sources which made the same changes as Paul and it is very unlikely those other sources were following Paul's lead. It also makes me wonder how the doctrine of inspiration would fit within that explanation. [O'Brien, 289f; Best, 379]

● **CHRIST 'RECEIVED' FAITH AND 'GAVE' GIFTS** — A couple older commentators (Theodoret, 5th century AD and Oecumenius, 10th century AD) explained it as 'Christ received the faith of men and gave gifts'. [Best, 379]

● **'A GENERAL REFERENCE TO THE PASSAGE ONLY'** — "The obvious differences between both the Hebrew and Greek (Septuagint) Old Testament texts of Psalm 68:18 and Paul's citation of it suggest that *he is probably making only a general allusion to the passage for the sake of analogy, rather than specifically identifying it as a direct prediction of Christ.*" [MacArthur, 137f] *It is true the NT authors were much freer in quoting the OT than we would be in our modern culture. "The personal pronoun of Hab 2.4 is omitted by Paul (Rom 1.17; Gal 3.11) thus allowing the text to refer to a believer's faith; in quoting Deut 30.12-14 at Rom 10.6-8 he eliminates all the original reference to a commandment of the Law.' This freedom with the text exists in the OT itself: the Chronicler modified the material of 1, 2 Samuel and 1, 2 Kings (or vice versa if the latter books used 1, 2 Chronicles).*" [Best, 381]

● **THE ALTERED TEXT PROVIDES A DEEPER OR MORE MYSTICAL MEANING** — At least two commentators (C. J. Ellicott, 19th century and Grotius, date unknown) stated Paul altered the text to provide a 'deeper or more mystical meaning.' The problem with this view is that instead of giving it a fuller meaning, it gives an entirely different meaning. [Hoehner, 526; Best, 379]

● **IT IS A QUOTE FROM A HYMN** — Recognizing the differences, some do not attempt to reconcile the two passages but rather state Paul quoted from some other source. *While I believe there to be better explanations as to its source, I do believe this is going in the right direction. "Although the text of Eph. 4.8 must ultimately be derived from Ps. 68.18, it may be quoted by the author not directly from Scripture but in a Christianized form from the hymnody of his community. It is clear from the Benedictus (Luke 1.68-79) and Magnificat (Luke 1.46-55) that whole phrases and verses could be lifted from the Old Testament and used in new Christian compositions (compare also e.g. Rev. 18.7f. with Isa. 47.9, and Luke 2.32 with Isa. 42.6).*" [Muddiman 188] *NOTE the importance of last week's lesson on the possibility of rendering the introductory formula as either 'he said' or 'it said.' If Paul had meant 'he said' then the obvious reference would be to the Lord and therefore limit from where it was quoted. But if Paul had meant 'it said' then the quote could be from either a canonical or non-canonical source.*

● **PAUL WAS GIVING AN INSPIRED SUMMATION OF WHAT THE PSALM MEANT USING v. 18 AS A BASIS** — Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, may have been 'summarizing' Psalm 68 with words resembling v. 18. Harold Hoehner: *"It is similar, perhaps, to the way a news reporter summarizes a thirty-minute speech in just two or three sentences. It is possible that one sentence by the reporter is very close to a sentence in the speech. Some could accuse the reporter of inaccuracy because it was not identical. However, the reporter's purpose is not direct citation on any one sentence but a summary of the whole speech.* A study of this psalm reveals many examples of God's gifts to people, hence, it is classified as a song of victory. The first portion speaks of God's presence and activity (vv. 1-6) protecting the widows, giving the desolate homes, and leading prisoners to prosperity (vv. 5-6). In the second part, he speaks of God's past activity (vv. 7-18), marching with Israel in the wilderness, providing rain, providing for the needy (vv. 7-10), giving them victory over their enemies, and prospering them with the spoils (vv 11-14). Again, in David's time, he gained victory in Zion (2 Sam 5:6-10) and received gifts from the enemy (Ps 68:15-18). The third section describes God's deliverance, care for his saints, and the scattering of his enemies (vv. 19-23). The fourth portion describes the procession of God into the sanctuary (vv. 24-27). The fifth part speaks of kings bringing gifts to God and the removal of those who do unrighteousness (vv. 28-31). The final segment is a call to praise God whose power is in the skies, a power and strength which he gives to his people (vv. 32-35). These are among the numerous gifts God gives to people. Hence, it appears that Paul takes this prevailing theme of God's gifts to people and applies it to the church." [Hoehner, 528]

● **THE OT 'RECEIVE' HAS THE SENSE OF 'GIVE' ('DIVIDING THE SPOILS')** — *There has been a tradition of Christian interpretation which has argued that the notion of 'giving' was also implied in the Old Testament context (Chrysostom has often been quoted in support of this theory: 'The one [word] is the same as the other; to 'receive' is to take for the purpose of giving to another'). It is argued that the Hebrew verb rendered 'receive' sometimes has the sense of 'to take in order to give' to someone else, or perhaps to 'fetch.' OT passages are quoted to illustrate this principle: in the ancient world the conqueror's spoils were divided, and the booty shared (e.g., when Abraham defeated Chedorlaomer and his allies he took booty with the intention of giving it away: to Lot, what he had lost; to Melchizedek, the tithes; to Aner, Eschol and Mamre, their portion – Gen. 14. David likewise received the spoil in order to give it away – 1 Sam. 30:26-31. Israel's enemies, too, were in the habit of dividing the spoil, first taking it and then distributing it – Judg. 5:30.) On this basis the differences in Paul's quotation would be 'formally but not substantially' contradictory. This explanation would also suit the present context in which the apostles, prophets, evangelists, etc., are described as the gifts of the ascended Christ the church. [O'Brien, 291f; Hendriksen, 190f] Peter O'Brien however points out this runs into difficulties both linguistically and textually. In none of the 'parallel passages' is the Hebrew word being used translated in the LXX by some form of Paul's word for 'to give' which might be expected if the original had the nuance of 'to take in order to give.' Further, when the Hebrew verb signifies to 'fetch' it is usually accompanied by a prepositional phrase which is lacking in Ps. 68:18. [O'Brien, 292] But while*

rejected by Peter O'Brien, many of the other commentators like this explanation.

● **PSALM 68 IS ITSELF QUOTING FROM NUMBERS, THEREFORE THE SENSE IS 'TO GIVE'** — An interesting interpretation mentioned by G. V. Smith and mentioned in several of the commentaries I studied. He claims that “Psalm 68 reminisces God’s triumphs in the past (vv. 1-19), including the exodus and wilderness period in Israel’s history, and his appearance on Mount Sinai where the heavens dropped and the earth trembled (v. 8). The Lord defeated the Canaanites and then chose to set his sanctuary in Zion. Accompanied by myriads of heavenly hosts, he ascends the heights, leads captives captive, and receives gifts among men, even the rebellious, in order that he might dwell among them (v. 18). Smith rejects the notion that the procession of v. 24 is to be understood of a cultic procession of the ark and the people of Israel into the sanctuary. Instead, the reference is to ‘the movement and presence of God in past and present history which is revealed in acts of mercy’ (vv. 19, 20, 28), judgment (v. 21), and particularly the theophany (vv. 1, 8, 16-18, 35). The final section looks forward to the eschatological time in which God is in his ‘temple in Jerusalem and has universal dominion over all kings and kingdoms’. The military language of Psalm 68:17 and 18 is poetic and not to be taken literally. Its function was to focus on the main point of the Psalm, namely, the entrance of God into his sanctuary in Zion. But first he ascends the mount and takes captives with him (v. 18a). These prisoners are not Gentile foes, but Israelites who were often rebellious (vv. 5-6, 18b). *Smith claims that Psalm 68 is itself referring to earlier Scripture; it ‘echoes’ the language of Numbers 8 and 18, where the Levites are mentioned as being taken by the Lord from among the people of Israel (8:6, 14) since they belong to him in a special way (‘the Levites shall be mine’, v. 14; cf. 3:45). But having taken them for himself, he then gives them back as gifts to the people so as to serve the congregation. Thus, Numbers 18:6, ‘I have taken your brothers the Levites from among the people of Israel; to you they are given as a gift for the Lord, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.’ If Psalm 68 is read in this light, then the captives taken in Yahweh’s train as he enters his sanctuary are not his foes, but ministers whom he has taken and then given to his people to serve them on his behalf (cf. Isa. 66:20-21).*” [O’Brien, 292f]

*The beauty of this interpretation is that it serves as a perfect illustration for Paul’s point if the ascended Christ with His spoils (v. 8) turns around and gives them back (v. 11). “However, this fails to solve the problem of how the text was changed from ‘you receive gifts’ in Ps 68:18 to ‘he gave gifts’ in Eph 4:8 and further, the use of the analogy from Num 8 is unacceptable, for in Ps 68 the captives were enemies whereas in Num 8 those taken were within the camp of Israel. Furthermore, nowhere are the Levites viewed as captives in Num 8. They are taken from among Israel to be used among their own people.”* [Hoehner, 527f]

● **PAUL ADAPTED THE VERSE FOR HIS OWN USE** — “The supposition that St. Paul does not intend either to quote exactly or to interpret, but in the familiar Jewish fashion adapts the passage to his own use, knowing that those of his readers who were familiar with the psalm would recognise the alteration and see the purpose of it, namely, that instead of receiving gifts of homage Christ gives His gifts to men, is not open to any serious objection, since he does not found any argument on the passage.... Paul wishes to speak of the spiritual gifts granted to the Christian in the measure of the gift of Christ, exalted to heaven. An expression of Scripture occurs to him, which strikes him as being [‘an appropriate quote for the situation’]. Depicting originally the triumph of God, it strikes him as expressing well the triumph of Christ, but he does not identify either the facts or the persons.” [Abbott, 112]

● **PAUL WAS NOT QUOTING THE HEBREW OT BUT THE JEWISH TARGUM** — There have been quotes found in other ancient versions and the Targums which greatly effect our discussion (from last week’s lesson: *The Targums were at first oral renderings with a diversity of readings from synagogue to synagogue; later these were reduced to writing, and finally an official Targum evolved.*) “The fact that Paul’s interpretation is found in the Syriac and the Targum shows that it is not merely arbitrary; it may point rather to his close acquaintance with the Aramaic and / or Hebrew.” [Ellis, 16] We know other NT writers quoted from the Targums; F. F. Bruce gives the following examples of Targum quotes (or renderings known to us nowadays only from the Targums), especially when such renderings are better suited to the argument to which they are applied than the Hebrew or LXX wording would be. [Bruce, 342]:

‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay’ (Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30 is from the Targumic rendering of Deut 32:35)

‘and be forgiven’ (Mark 4:12 is from the Targumic rendering of Isa 6:10)

‘I saw the glory of the Lord’ (John 12:41 is from the Targumic rendering of Isa 6:1)

Here is the quote from the Targum:

Psalm 68:18 YLT	Psalm 68:18 Targum	Eph 4:8 YLT
<p><i>Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast taken captive captivity, Thou hast taken gifts for men</i></p>	<p><i>You ascended the firmament, Prophet Moses; you took captivity captive; you learned the words of the Law; you gave them as gifts to the sons of men.</i></p>	<p><i>Having gone up on high he led captive captivity, and gave gifts to men</i></p>

Note the Targum adds / identifies the one who ascended as Moses, and also adds the notation that the gifts given to Israel

was the Law (while ‘the sons of men’ might indicate all humanity, it should probably be understood here as referring to the Jews).

While the quote from the Targum does answer questions, it also introduces new problems. Ernest Best gives weaknesses to this theory: “This assumes [Paul] knew the targum and, since quotations introduced to confirm arguments, as here, are only effective if they are known not only to the writer but also to those who hear or read them, it must be assumed [Paul] expected his readers to know the targum version of the Psalm. But were targums, renderings into Aramaic enabling those who spoke Aramaic but not Hebrew to understand Synagogue readings, in use in Asia Minor? Would not the Septuagint have fulfilled this function there where Jews normally spoke Greek? There were a considerable number of Jews in this area and, even though some of them continued to use Aramaic in their homes, would they not have been satisfied with a Greek translation for public worship? Almost all the extant Jewish inscriptions in Asia Minor are in Greek and use the LXX; occasionally Hebrew appears but never Aramaic. If it is difficult to think of [Paul’s] Jewish readers being familiar with the targum, it is almost impossible to conceive of his Gentile readers as familiar with it.... It is clear v. 8 is no more a quotation of the targum than it is of the MT or the LXX; it differs from the targum in rejecting the references to Moses and the Law and in its second line it has only one action on the part of Christ (‘giving’) unlike the two of Moses.” [Best, 379f; see also Abbott, 112; Bruce, 340ff] Another issue brought forth by the commentators is that the earliest Targum to be discovered is centuries after the NT period, but those same commentators also recognize that while that is true for the earliest *written* Targum, there is evidence of *oral* traditions much older than the earliest written form we have in existence.

● **PAUL WAS NOT QUOTING THE HEBREW OT BUT A TRADITIONAL VERSION WHICH WAS FAMILIAR TO THE EARLY CHRISTIANS** — Along with the above, many of the commentators mention a traditional rendering popular at the time. “It is possible, indeed, that the Apostle adopted a *traditional* version or interpretation of the passage which was familiar, and of which some indication is found in the Peshitta Syriac and the Chaldee Paraphrase. [Salmond, 324f]

Psalm 68:18 YLT	Psalm 68:18 Peshitta Syriac	Eph 4:8 YLT
<i>Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast taken captive captivity, Thou hast taken gifts for men</i>	<i>You ascended on high; and you led captivity captive; and you gave gifts to the sons of men<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Having gone up on high he led captive captivity, and gave gifts to men</i>

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Richard A. Taylor, ‘The Use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8 In Light of the Ancient Versions’, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (1991): 334

*While this does not answer the question as to how or why the Hebrew was altered from ‘taken’ to ‘given’ it does show such an alteration was not unique to Paul’s quote.*

● **PAUL WAS QUOTING A CURRENT JEWISH INTERPRETATION (A ‘MIDRASH PESHER’)** — It would be best to begin by reminding what was given in our last lesson (with minor modifications):

**Midrash Peshet** — Rabbinic interpretation / commentary on part of the Hebrew scriptures meant to fill in the gaps of the Torah (‘Midrash’ could correspond to our English word ‘exegesis’ while ‘Peshet’ comes from a Hebrew word meaning ‘interpretation’ in the sense of ‘solution’). They are used to resolve problems in difficult passages. The earliest Midrashim come from the 2nd century AD, although they find much of their content in older oral traditions.

*This was in common practice amongst the Jews in Paul’s day. “But if we may assume, as no doubt we may, that it is giving us here an ancient interpretation, we have a solution of the difficulty so far as St. Paul is concerned; he simply made use of the Rabbinical interpretation as being suitable to his purpose.” [Abbott, 112f] “The tradition has been taken over by [Paul] and incorporated into a midrash peshet rendering of the text in which he integrates his exposition of its meaning in the light of fulfillment in Christ into the actual quotation, a procedure which is, of course, not unusual in the contemporary Jewish exegetical techniques or elsewhere in the use of the OT in the NT.” [Lincoln, 243; see also O’Brien, 290]*

To the best of my ability, these appear to be at least the major theories being discussed. I do not have a definite favorite but I do find some more appealing than others. May we at least glean this from these theories: *The Word of God is mind-boggling and fascinating! It is incredible and infinite and humbling to study!!!*

**AUTHORITIES FROM WHICH PAUL QUOTED** — Besides Scripture, Paul also quoted from a variety of sources:

**the law of nature:** analogies of law (Rom 7:1-3; Gal 3:15; 4:1ff), occupations (Rom 9:21; 1 Cor 3:7, 24ff) and natural phenomena (Rom 11:16-24; 1 Cor 12:14). Paul uses it at times as an authority; e.g., Rom 1:18ff (cf. Rom 2:14ff) God’s power and deity are declared taught by nature; in 1 Cor 11:14 nature is called upon to distinguish between the sexes.

**the conscience of the individual:** 1 Cor 8:7ff; 10:25ff Paul speaks of following our conscience in the matter of eating foods offered to idols. 1 Tim 1:19 some having disobeyed their consciences have made a shipwreck of their faith.

**his own revelation from Christ or the Holy Spirit:** Paul writes in Galatians of his own revelation as received from

Christ (Gal 1:12; 16ff; 2:5).

**the teaching of Christ as received through oral or written apostolic traditions:** Paul's teaching of the Lord's Table is founded on Christ's own words (1 Cor 11:23ff); Paul's teaching on divorces also rests upon Christ's teachings (1 Cor 7:10).

**a mixing of the above:** e.g., in 1 Cor 9:7-14 Paul starts with an analogy from nature but proceeds to the witness of the OT, returns to an analogy from the temple, then closes by citing the command of Christ. In 1 Cor 15:3-11 Christ's resurrection is grounded in the OT, the apostolic tradition, and Paul's personal revelation.

**Paul's own authority:** e.g., Paul concludes his teaching on tongues by an appeal to his own authority: *'If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.'* (1 Cor 14:37 NKJV). With hesitation he warns the Corinthians of his authority: *'For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed...'* (2 Cor 10:8 NKJV). In Rom 13:1-7 Paul gives instructions concerning our relation to the government without citing any authority except his own apostolic rights, as he also does in 1 Cor 12-14 concerning spiritual gifts. "It is impossible, of course, to know just how much knowledge of the OT and the apostolic traditions Paul assumes on the part of his readers; but his own apostolic jurisdiction is unmistakable in a number of passages." [Ellis, 30]

**NT Prophets:** *"The gift of prophecy was highly regarded in the apostolic age (cf. Acts 2:17ff; 1 Cor 14:1-5); it was a specific gift or appointment of the Holy Spirit; and it was not conferred upon all. Cf. 1 Cor 12:28. Swete ('The Holy Spirit in the New Testament') states that 'only a relatively small number of believers were "established to be prophets", forming a charismatic order to which a recognised position was given in the Church.... There is an activity of the Holy Spirit in the early Church which may well explain the source of some of the interpretations. It is the exercise of prophecy, and it occurs ... in the disclosure of the import of revelations from the Holy Spirit (e.g., Acts 21:11). There is no reason why it should not include elaborations, interpretation and application of the OT Scriptures."* [Ellis, 109, 111f]

**WHAT ARE WE TO 'TAKE AWAY' FROM TODAY'S LESSON?** — After looking at the problem and some of the possible resolutions, E. Earle Ellis gives a good summation of today's lesson. This will serve as a good way to close a difficult discussion.

"It is a reasonable inference that the body of writings accepted as authoritative by the first century Jewish community serves as Paul's criterion of canonical authority as well. A problem arises, therefore, when in Paul's letters one finds quotations or references which are not to be found in the Jewish body of authority and yet which, from their context and introductory formula, refer to authoritative writings. Several possible solutions to the dilemma presents themselves:

- (1) Paul is freely paraphrasing one or several canonical passages or repeating a paraphrase in common use.
- (2) He is quoting a non-canonical writing, which itself makes use of a scriptural paraphrase, as an appropriate rendering of the OT and with no intention of vesting authority in the apocryphal document.
- (3) The apostle's canon differs from Palestinian Judaism in including oral and recorded sayings of Jesus, and psalms and oracles of the apostles and / or early Christian prophets. Certain of his quotations stem from this source.
- (4) His canon embraces certain apocryphal Jewish writings, and he uses these on occasion in an authoritative sense.

There is considerable evidence that the Jewish canon was in completed form in the first century and that it embraced the writings commonly received by Protestant Churches today." [Ellis, 33]

**"Paul often gives 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.... [P]aul does not hesitate to give his OT citations as interpretive renderings; and he is convinced that he conveys the true (i.e. the Spirit's) meaning best in this way.... In a sense the whole NT is an exegesis of the Old; for it seeks throughout to explain the Christian movement as a fulfillment of the OT. So Luther wrote: '... All [the apostles'] preaching is bases on the OT, and there is no word in the NT which does not look back to the Old wherein it was already declared.... The OT is thus the testament of Christ — a letter which he caused to be opened after his death and read and proclaimed in the light of the Gospel...' It is 'the light of the Gospel' which determines Paul's approach to the OT. The demonstrable fact that Jesus is the promised Messiah — a major theme of OT citation in the Gospel — is assumed. The apostle is chiefly concerned with the next step — the significance of the Scriptures for the Messianic Age and Messianic Community.... For Paul, Christ was not only a factor giving added meaning to the OT but the only means whereby the OT could be rightly understood; it was not merely that he saw Christ in the OT but that he viewed the whole scope of OT prophecy and history from the standpoint of the Messianic Age in which the OT stood open, fulfilled in Jesus Christ and in His new creation.... A. Edersheim: 'For popular use the Scriptures were no longer quoted in the Hebrew, which was not spoken, or from the LXX, which was under the Rabbinic ban, but targumed, rendered into the vernacular; the principle being very strongly expressed that in so doing, it was not the letter but the meaning of the passage which was to be given.' ... **In****

*selecting a particular version or in creating an ad hoc rendering Paul views his citation as thereby more accurately expressing the true meaning of the Scripture. For Paul, as for the rabbis, the 'letter' was sacred; but unlike the rabbis, Paul valued the 'letter' not for itself alone but for the meaning which it conveyed. His idea of a quotation was not a worshipping of the letter or 'parroting' of the text; neither was it an eisegesis which arbitrarily imposed a foreign meaning upon the text. It was rather, in his eyes, a quotation–exposition, a Midrash pesher, which drew from the text the meaning originally implanted there by the Spirit and expressed that meaning in the most appropriate words and phrases known to him.... Pauline exegesis might be termed 'grammatical–historical plus'. The apostle does not ignore the historical significance of the text; neither does he play fast and loose with the grammar if care is taken to understand the precise purpose and meaning of his citation. The grammar and the historical meaning are assumed; and Pauline exegesis, in its essential character, begins where grammatical–historical exegesis ends. The latter discipline could say 'these' possibilities lie within the grammar, and 'this' is the probably historical significance. But Paul would probably begin by saying, 'The OT Scripture has a wider meaning than its immediate historical application; even OT history is God–molded history whose significance does not lie merely in the event but in the meaning of the event for its later fulfilment. Furthermore, grammatical exegesis can only circumscribe the possibilities as to what a text says; to determine the meaning of a text one must not only select the proper grammatical possibility but also fit it into a proper interpretation of OT history as a whole.' This is precisely what Paul proceeds to do, integrating his exposition into the quotations themselves; and in doing so he is convinced that he thereby expresses the true meaning of the text." [Ellis, 14f, 27, 55, 115f, 146ff]*