

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*An Exegesis of Ephesians 4:1-16 With Emphasis on
Paul's Use of Psalm 68:18: Implications for Preaching
and Teaching Today*

BY
ABIOLA MBAMALU

*A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Theology in Biblical Studies (New Testament)*

JUNE 2003

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APPROVED: _____

SUPERVISOR: _____

DR. S. M NGEWA

SECOND READER: _____

DR. G. L. HUTTAR

EXTERNAL READER: _____


DR. PAUL MUMO

JUNE 2003

Student's Declaration

AN EXEGESIS OF EPHESIANS 4:1-16 WITH EMPHASIS ON PAUL'S USE OF
PSALM 68:18: IMPLICATIONS FOR PREACHING AND TEACHING TODAY

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College
or University for academic credit

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners

(signed) _____

Abiola Mbamalu

June, 2003

To my *Dad*

ABSTRACT

This study is primarily concerned with Paul's use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:1-16. To this end, a literary-grammatical analysis of the relevant passage was done. With regard to the quotation found in Ephesians 4:8, we found that the change from the verb 'receive' as found in Psalm 68:18 to the verb 'give' in Ephesians 4:8 could be accounted for by context, and affirmed by semantics. A semantic analysis of the verb לקח 'receive' indicates that it co-occurs more frequently with the verb נתן 'give' than with any other verb. Working with the assumption that this finding in terms of collocations may, perhaps, arise from a socio-cultural context, we investigated the socio-cultural context of the concept of warfare, for this is a concept that underlies Psalm 68:18.

In addition, we looked closely at Ephesians 4:9-10, for they serve as commentary on the quotation in Ephesians 4:8. We found, in terms of the method of exegesis at play, that the commentary is a Peshet, and that it employs an argument from silence to identify the referent of the quotation. The conclusion of this study is that we cannot replicate Paul's method of exegesis in terms of arguing from silence, for this will necessarily lead us away from the text, and easily degenerate into doing an eisegesis rather than an exegesis. The corollary of this is that the task of modern interpreters is basically different from the task in which Paul was engaged. Paul's task was not primarily to interpret Scriptures, but to interpret the Christ-event and related subsequent events in the light of Scriptures. However, there is one basic principle employed by Paul which we can emulate today. This is the principle of knowing the context of Scriptures, for this is one principle that enabled Paul to use the verb 'give' instead of the verb 'receive'. If this principle was important for Paul, it is all the more relevant in our time, because of our distance from the actual period in which the events took place as well as the time they were written. Among other things, it is one principle that helps us know the different senses which a word may signify to the original hearers or readers. Having a thorough understanding of the context of Scriptures is highly recommended to modern interpreters (preachers and teachers) today by Paul's use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study and Problem Statement

The motivation to study Ephesians 4:1-16 more closely issues from a general interest in the use of the Old Testament (OT afterwards) in the New Testament (NT afterwards). This interest is encouraged and sustained by the existential question of the normativeness or otherwise of the exegetical methods employed by NT writers. This question has been differently answered by two scholars, Richard Hays and Richard Longenecker. The latter, taking his cue from the Qumran Community's manner of exegesis, enumerates the different methods employed by NT writers to exegete their texts and concludes that such methods are not normative and should not be employed by contemporary exegetes. The former sees the exegesis of NT writers, especially Paul, as an inner-biblical exegesis and therefore an issue of intertextuality. This mode of exegesis is traceable to ancient Judaism. He, therefore, submits that such an exegesis is normative for Christians to practice today.

Ephesians 4:1-16 on its own is particularly interesting as an object of study because of the quotation found in its eighth verse. The quotation has many linguistic similarities with Psalm 68:18 (67:19 in LXX) but is by no means a verbatim reproduction of the Septuagint and the Hebrew texts. A change made in the quotation is the portrayal of the subject in the third person instead of the second person as we have in the Septuagint and the Hebrew texts. This change is, however, admissible as

an adjustment that was perhaps necessitated by change of context. A more substantial change is found in Paul's use of the verb εδωκεν 'he gave' in the quotation when the nearest Septuagint, Vaticanus, has the verb ελαβες 'you received' while the Hebrew has the corresponding verb לקחת 'you received'. As mentioned earlier, the concern of scholars is not so much the change in personal pronouns, the concern of scholars is the verb used by Paul, which is notably different from that used in the Greek OT as well as in the Hebrew Bible. This use of a different verb by Paul has provoked diverse reactions from scholars. Best concludes that Paul must be making reference to some other source apart from the scriptures (Best 1998, 381ff). Mitton incredulously wonders "one does however find it difficult to think of a Christian writer as quite deliberately changing (so as to reverse its meaning) a word of scripture to make it support his own contention" (Mitton 1973, 145). Longenecker, however, sees Paul's use of the verb 'to give' instead of 'to receive' to be influenced by the existence of a then extant variant reading that switched the Hebrew radicals from לקח to חלק which means 'to give' (Longenecker 1999, 108). This variant reading, he posits, is found also in the Targum and the Peshitta. He sees Paul using a midrashic method of exegesis in this passage. Hays does not include this passage in his treatment of NT use of the OT and we shall not attempt to pre-empt him at this point. In view of all these uncertainties about the text that Paul used, one would *prima facie* conclude that this passage would least yield to us an adequate understanding of Paul's use of the OT for it is, perhaps, not representative of the way in which Paul cites the OT. I, however, disagree with this conclusion, because the result of this investigation may at least

suggest to us one way in which Paul does not use scriptures. Such a result would thus give us a further understanding of what should, perhaps, not be regarded as normative in the use of scriptures today. This study is, therefore, concerned with the question of the normative nature of Paul's exegesis as exemplified in his use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8.

Purpose of Study

In order to answer the question of the normative nature of Paul's exegesis, this study investigates Paul's use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8 in terms of manner and reason.

Research Questions

In the light of the purpose of this study, there are three questions, which this research answers. These are:

1. How did Paul use Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8 within the context of the relevant passage (vv. 1-16)?
2. Why did Paul cite this quotation in this manner?
3. To what extent could we emulate Paul's manner of exegesis today?

Significance of Study

This study is significant in the wake of the discontent expressed by some scholars like B.Y. Quarshie and Walter Wink with the historical-critical method of modern day exegesis. They have considered it inadequate because it leaves a big gap

between Biblical Studies as an academic enterprise and as a faith building exercise. While there are indeed different levels of interpretations to meet the different needs of people, a total divorce of faith from history makes nonsense of faith and renders the literature in question an unreliable witness that cannot lay any claim to genuine authority. Such a dichotomy between faith and scholarship was absent in the life of Paul, instead we find in him a symbiosis between faith and scholarship. While we cannot pretend that things are exactly the same since the time of Paul, hence the need for a historical-critical method, the task of exegesis is not just descriptive, it is essentially interpretive and aims at being prescriptive for the literature that is handled is authoritative. For this reason, it is apt to investigate the processes which our forerunners took to appropriate and mediate God's words to their people.

This study is also significant in terms of its methodology. A lot of work has been done in this area by various scholars. For instance, Stanley Christopher in his work: Paul and the language of Scripture, has investigated Paul's technique of citation and compares it with the practices of other ancient writers. Earle Ellis's work: Paul's use of the Old Testament discusses Paul's theological application of the OT and concludes that his use of the OT was greatly influenced by Christ and the apostolic church more than by Rabbinic Judaism. Longenecker has focused on the methods of exegesis employed by NT writers, while Hays considers the echoes that allusions and quotations in the NT must have evoked in their original hearers or readers. Dodd in his work "according to Scriptures" concentrates on the OT passages commonly used by NT writers as foundations for theology and proposes an underlying early

Christian oral testimony. Kaiser seeks to defend the position of the NT writers against modern criticism that the former used the OT rather permissively. Kaiser in his work “the uses of the Old Testament in the New” concentrates on those scriptures that were quoted by NT writers mainly in defense of the new faith before Jews. This study, with the hindsight derived from these books and others, seeks an appropriate category to understand Paul’s exegesis by noting the grammatical clues in the text and by employing the insights gained from Relevance Theory as prounded by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson.

Methodology

This study as literary research seeks an answer to the problem analyzed above by noting the socio-cultural dynamics of warfare that would aid our exegesis of the text in focus – Ephesians 4:1-16. An appropriate linguistic theory namely, Relevance Theory is also applied to our text, as mentioned above.

Assumptions

While this writer is quite aware of the fact that not all scholars accept Paul’s authorship of the epistle to the Ephesians, she is working on the assumption that Paul is the writer of this epistle. Since more scholars agree on Pauline authorship of Colossians and these same scholars note the similarities between the two epistles, it is a comparatively small step to take in order to accept Pauline authorship of this epistle rather than posit a faceless disciple of Paul.

It is also the assumption of this writer that in citing the quotation found in Ephesians 4:8, Paul was not quoting from memory.

Definition of Terms

Definition of terms becomes necessary not because these terms are necessarily being used in a special manner but because this work crosses two disciplines, namely, Biblical Studies and Linguistics. This means that terms that are familiar to one segment of my audience may be a little strange to the other. Words that occur frequently in the work are, therefore, explained here in order not to alienate any of my readers.

Encyclopaedic Entry

According to Sperber and Wilson “encyclopaedic entry contains information about the extension and/or denotation of a concept: that is, about the objects, events and/or properties which instantiate it” (Sperber and Wilson 1999, 86). For instance, the encyclopaedic entry for the concept *elephant* would contain a set of assumptions about elephants, such as their size, strength, etc.

Explicature

As defined by Diane Blakemore an explicature is the fleshing out of the semantic representation of an utterance (Blakemore 1997, 59). In other words, it is the overt meaning made explicit in an utterance, which a speaker intends the reader to access concerning an utterance. Let us take the following conversation as an example:

A: Did you enjoy your holiday?

B: The beaches were crowded and the hotel was full of bugs.

While it is possible for the beaches to be crowded with jelly fish and oysters and the hotel room to be full of hidden microphones, A would flesh out B's response as:

"The beaches at the hotel resort that B went to were crowded with people and the hotel where she stayed was full of insects" (Blakemore 1997, 58) – this constitutes an explicature of B's utterance.

Implicature

"Implicatures are assumptions derived from the proposition that the hearer takes the speaker to have expressed together with the context" (Blakemore, 1997, 81). For example:

A: Do you like the new dress I bought for you?

B: It's too short

While B does not seem to directly answer A's question, A can still derive the assumption that the dress in question is short and that B does not like it if A already knows from context that A does not like short dresses. This assumption "B does not like the dress that A bought for her" is the implicature of B's utterance.

Midrash

This is a hermeneutical method, usually practiced by Rabbis, that consists of rules that an interpreter can apply to Scripture in order to discover its applicability in a given context.

Pesher

This is an exegetical method employed by the Qumran community to interpret the scriptures in the light of their own experience. After a scripture is cited, they preface their interpretation of its meaning by saying, “this is that”. They would, then, state what the cited passage meant to them as if that was the meaning intended by the original writer.

Relevance Theory

As propounded by Dan Sperber and Dierdre Wilson, Relevance Theory aims at explaining how a hearer recognizes the intended meaning of an utterance. It is based on the assumption that relevance is the principle that governs a speaker’s choice of utterance as well as a hearer’s choice of interpreting any utterance.

Delimitation

The conclusion of this research does not necessarily lead to a general conclusion on the normativeness or otherwise of Paul’s exegesis in other texts. Each use of the OT by Paul needs to be examined on its own merit. However, noting the difficulties observable in Paul’s use of the OT in this passage, the conclusions which we draw from this research may, perhaps, be instructive in the reading of the use of the OT by Paul in other texts.

CHAPTER 2

EXEGESIS OF EPHESIANS 4:1-16

The letter to the Ephesians

Introduction

Known to us now as ‘Ephesians’, this letter, which was traditionally ascribed to Paul, has provoked controversy down the centuries. Marcion (70–150 A.D) depicted it as a letter written by Paul to the Laodiceans. The earliest extant witness to the Greek text – the second century Chester Beatty papyrus, P⁴⁶, lacks the phrase ἐν Ἐφέσω. Fourth-century uncial manuscripts; codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus also lack this phrase. It is worthy of note that the epistle to the Romans, which is a general letter much like *Ephesians* also, lacks a specific destination in some manuscripts. Does this then suggest that the general nature of such letters lends them to consideration as circular letters? *Ephesians* is distinct from *Romans* because there is nothing in its content that gives an inkling of a local context or that betrays a local color. This is, perhaps, one reason that the suggestion that there is a blank after τοῖς οὐσίῳ is quite appealing. The blank would suggest that the letter was initially meant as a circular letter with a provision to fill in the name of any church that received it. The fact that Marcion attributes the recipients of this letter to the Laodiceans may count as support for this hypothesis. The lack of any personal reference in the letter by Paul to a church which he founded and where he spent at

least two years according to Acts 19 also seems to support the above thesis of a circular letter. Abbott has, however, pointed out that having a blank in a letter is not characteristic of ancient letters (Abbott 1979, vii). He suggests that the phrase be taken as “the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus” (Abbott 1979, viii). Another hypothesis to account for the absence of ‘in Ephesus’ in our earliest extant ancient manuscript was propounded by Goodspeed and supported by Mitton. This hypothesis suggests that the title ‘to the Ephesians’ was added by a collector of Paul’s works who wrote it as an introduction to Paul’s works in order to commend the works to all Christians (Goodspeed 1953, 223). However, as Andrew Lincoln (Lincoln 1990, lxxix) says, one problem with this hypothesis is that *Ephesians* does not read like an introduction. Perhaps, the most probable reconstruction that commends the support of many scholars is that *Ephesians* was intended to be a circular letter addressed generally to Gentiles in a particular location. According to Abbott, the letter was addressed to “the Gentile converts in Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae and elsewhere in Phrygia and the neighbourhood of that province” (Abbott 1979, viii). However, quite a number of scholars like Guthrie, Best and Martin prefer to posit Asia Minor as the destination of the letter, though they acknowledge that apart from its reference to Tychicus nothing in the letter itself gives a hint of its destination. The letter probably came to be associated with Ephesus because a copy was found there. This then leads us to the question of the authorship of this epistle.

Authorship

The authorship of ‘Ephesians’ was never in doubt until the rise of critical studies in the eighteenth century. Internal evidence of the letter portrays Paul as the writer of

the letter in 1:1 and 3:1. Tradition also attributes the authorship of the epistle to Paul. Marcion, who accepted virtually nothing that was not written by Paul, had this epistle listed under the name 'to the Laodiceans' in his canon. The Muratorian canon (A.D. 180) acknowledges the epistle as Paul's work (Patzia 1990, 121).

However, for a number of reasons, which we shall not discuss extensively here, scholars are divided about Paul's authorship of the epistle. Increased interest in Pauline studies has led to a churning out of various works on the person, theology and writing style of Paul. This in effect has made scholars come up with a particular portrait of Paul. A reconstruction of the life of Paul (Fitzmyer 1968, 212-2) suggests that he got converted in A.D. 36 and was involved in missionary work between A.D. 46-58 when he got imprisoned. Paul is generally believed to have died before the destruction of Jerusalem around A.D. 67. Since Christianity started out initially within a Jewish context, the first adherents were Jews and there was a considerable homogeneity of views and thought. However, as Christianity moved out to Gentile lands a clash of culture and of faith arose among the Jewish and Gentile members and congregations. Paul, as an apostle to the Gentiles was in the forefront of this problem. He sought to affirm the sufficiency of Christ without any necessary recourse to Jewish practices by Gentiles. To this end, some of the criteria for authenticating a letter as written by Paul are its discussion of salvation by faith and a reference to the Jewish-Gentile divide in one way or the other. In addition, Paul's use of words and his manner of expressing his thoughts have received considerable study also. Mitton quoting Sanday and Headlam describes Paul's writing style as marked

by “energy and vivacity, a rush of words and language which is rapid, terse and incisive” (Mitton 1973, 4). Beare shares the same opinion when he says “with Paul, even when he is not moved by the heat of controversy, ideas crowd in upon his mind as he writes, and are thrown out in sudden jets and flashes of brilliance” (Beare 1953, 598). The corollary to this reconstruction is Paul’s creativity and ingenuity. He is said to be so imaginative that any letter purporting to have been written by him and bearing a striking resemblance to another could not have issued from him.

It is the failure of *Ephesians* to meet all these criteria that earns it a pseudonymous authorship from many scholars. This portrayal of the letter’s authorship has considerable support in spite of its internal evidence and the external evidence of tradition that it is Pauline. Concerning writing style, *Ephesians*, is “characterized by long and involved sentences, with clause linked to clause and phrase to phrase, the whole constructed with deliberation and forethought... it reveals a calm and ruminative mind rather than the mercurial, impetuous, sometimes torrent-like mind of Paul” (Beare 1953, 598). However, argument based on style is quite inconclusive as Beare himself notes that *Ephesians* is cast in a different mold from the other letters. For *Ephesians* does not treat any controversial topic, but rather, is reflective; he only wonders whether this is reason enough to account for the observable differences. In addition, the liturgical language employed in the epistle could be attributed to the notable change in style (Martin 1970, 1106). Furthermore, Fitzmyer’s explanation of the different methods employed in antiquity to write letters should caution us against basing our conclusions on styles of writing. As he says,

one of the methods employed in writing is to “dictate the sense, leaving the formulation to a secretary” (Fitzmyer 1968, 226).

The emphasis of *Ephesians* on the unity between the Jews and the Gentiles (2:14-22) has been interpreted to suggest that the letter was written when there was no more division between the two groups. A number of scholars believe that this unity took place after the fall of Jerusalem, which must be after the death of Paul. Of course, this interpretation is a reading in-between the lines. For a letter that does not focus on any local context this may be a little extended. Second, the discussion of this unit starts from verse 11 where the writer acknowledges that some who called themselves “the circumcision” referred to the recipients of this letter as “the uncircumcised”. This does suggest that Jewish-Gentile division was by no means over by the time this letter was written. Rather, what we can infer from verses 14 and following is that the writer of this letter had his focus on the unity God accomplished through Jesus’ death. Therefore, the discussion of unity in this letter does not necessarily reflect the situation on the ground at that point.

Perhaps the argument against Pauline authorship of *Ephesians* stands or falls on its relationship with *Colossians*. About 34% of the words in *Colossians* are found in *Ephesians* while about 26.5% of the words in *Ephesians* are found in *Colossians* (Lincoln 1990, xlviii). Indeed, “the relationship between *Ephesians* and *Colossians* is by far the closest within the Pauline corpus, and within the New Testament as a whole is rivaled only by that among the synoptic gospels and that between 2 Peter

and Jude” (Lincoln 1990, xlvi). Similarity between *Ephesians* and *Colossians* spans overall structure (doctrine is followed by ethics), thematic sequence (these are the only two letters attributed to Paul that have the household code) and verbal links (in the commendation of Tychicus there is verbatim agreement of twenty-nine consecutive words (Lincoln 1990, xlvi – li). These observations on the similarities between the two letters leads, inevitably, to the question of dependence. Some scholars like Goodspeed, Lincoln and Mitton are of the view that *Ephesians* depended on *Colossians*. It is on this hypothesis that the issue of authorship hinges, for it is inconceivable that Paul should make use of his own material. To this end, a pseudonymous authorship has been ascribed to *Ephesians*. The main thesis of the argument of these scholars is that an admirer of Paul read all his works especially *Colossians* and decided to write a general letter in Paul’s name as an introduction to the rest of the writings. This theory is said to do justice to the observable similarities and differences between the two letters; similarities with respect to the use of characteristically Pauline words, and differences in terms of using these words to denote different meanings. Differences have been observed in the use of words such as μυστηριον, οικονομια, πληρωμα. These differences have been ascribed to a situation where a writer who is at pains to imitate Paul makes use of his words but gives himself away in using these words to mean something different from the original writer’s normal usage. This issue comes to a head when we note that scholars who reject Paul’s authorship of *Ephesians* on account of its close similarity to *Colossians* acknowledge in the same breath the originality of the work. Lincoln notes that the letter smacks of a “free and creative dependence, not a slavish

imitation or copying” (Lincoln 1990, li). The apparent contradiction in such a statement astounds some other scholars such as Foulkes who says “could an imitator have produced a work like those of the apostle, and yet written with such freedom and originality, showing such a profound advance on Paul’s thought in Colossians?” (Foulkes 1983, 39). According to Guthrie, the problem with positing a pseudonymous authorship of *Ephesians* is far reaching because while pseudonymy was common among secular writers,

there was no evidence in Christian literature for the idea of a conventional literary device, by which an author as a matter of literary custom and with the full approbation of his circle of readers publishes his own productions in another’s name. There was always an ulterior motive (Guthrie 1962, 56)

In addition, pseudonymy was usually employed to commend some “extra-canonical doctrine or else some unorthodox or unusual procedure such as women baptizing in the *Acts of Paul*” (Guthrie 1962, 57). Coming back to our epistle, *Ephesians* has not been found to propound any teaching different from what Paul could or would have advocated. Indeed, Mitton, who rejects Paul as the author nevertheless says that *Ephesians* provides “a brilliant and comprehensive summary of Paul’s main theological emphases” (Mitton 1973, 11). This largely means that a pseudonymous author lacks a motive for such an enterprise.

In conclusion, while one cannot dismiss with a wave of the hand the observations of scholars on style and the similarities between *Ephesians* and *Colossians*, this present writer chooses to accept this epistle as written by Paul following the observation by scholars on both sides of the divide that the epistle is not unPauline. In addition, she wants to put herself in the shoes of the original readers of the epistle who accepted it

as an epistle written by Paul given the fact that no one in the first century queried its authorship.

In the course of discussing the authorship of this letter we have made mention of some peculiar features of this epistle. Let us now turn to these fully.

Distinctive Characteristics of 'Ephesians'

The epistle to the Ephesians, as it has come down to us, is a general epistle much in the form of 'Romans'. It is general in the sense that it treats topics that are common to all Christians such as the works of Christ and its implications for believers, unity in the church, Christian conduct and spiritual warfare. The epistle significantly differs from 'Romans' another general epistle, in that it in no way gives an inkling of what was going on in that local assembly.

One of the distinctive characteristics of this epistle is the number of *hapax legomena*, words that are not found in any other New Testament book or in any other writing of Paul, found there. According to Abbott, who follows Thayer, there are some forty-two words in *Ephesians*, which are not found in any other New Testament book. Following Holtzmann, there are also some thirty-nine words, which are not found in any of the undisputed writings of Paul. However, this phenomenon can easily be accounted for by the fact that quite a number of these words are found in chapter 6 that discusses Christians' armor – a topic not treated extensively elsewhere in the New Testament. In addition, a comparison of this data with other undisputed

writings of Paul does not suggest a cause for alarm, for *Romans* has about a hundred hapax legomena while *Phillippians* has forty-one (Abbott 1979, xv).

Another distinctive of this epistle is its similarity to *Colossians*. We have dealt with this above.

The Place of *Ephesians* within the Pauline Corpus and the N.T Canon

The letter to the *Ephesians* belongs to the corpus of Pauline writings known as *captivity letters* along with *Philemon*, *Colossians* and *Phillippians* (Guthrie 1975, 472). Scattered throughout the letter is evidence that the letter was written while the author was in prison (3:1, 4:1, 6:20). The date of the imprisonment is usually put between A.D. 61–62 (Martin 1970, 1106). The book of *the Acts of the Apostles* informs us that Paul was first imprisoned in Caesarea (Acts 23:35, 24:27) for at least two years. The last chapter of Acts also mentions another imprisonment at Rome for at least another two years. Out of these four ‘captivity letters’ the first three, namely, *Colossians*, *Ephesians* and *Philemon* appear to share a common writing context for they were delivered by the hands of Tychicus and were presumably written around the same time. Scholars are almost unanimous that the place of the writing of these letters is Rome. For this reason, the date of their writing is placed towards the end of the life of Paul.

Within the Pauline corpus, *Ephesians* is unique because unlike many other Pauline letters it is neither an occasional letter like *I Corinthians* nor does it treat any controversial topic as the place of Jews in God’s plan in *Romans*, to which it is quite

similar. *Ephesians* articulates what C.H. Dodd calls “the crown of Paulinism” (Dodd 1929, 1225) and what Clinton sees as an advancement to Pauline thought (in comparison with his other epistles) with respect to eschatology, ecclesiology and God’s plan for humanity. As Lincoln notes “the distinctive emphasis of *Ephesians* is on realized eschatology but it does retain some future elements” (Lincoln 1990, xc). While Paul’s concept of God’s purpose for humanity in other epistles is its salvation, in *Ephesians* it is the unity of the church, that is, of the Gentiles and Jews that constitute it. A corollary of this is that the ‘Church’ in *Ephesians* is the universal church and not a local assembly just in line with the epistle’s emphasis on unity.

If the letter to the Ephesians were expunged from the New Testament canon, what do we stand to lose? We stand to miss the unique teaching that sees marriage as a symbol of the unity between the Church and Christ in chapter 5. We stand to miss the teaching on spiritual warfare in chapter 6. We stand to lose the unparalleled prayers in chapters 1 and 3 as well as the portrayal of believers as enthroned with Christ in heaven in chapter 2. Indeed, we stand impoverished. I could not agree more with Beare when he says

in all schools the whole conception of the church – of its essential nature as the body of Christ, and of its mission to unite all races and nations in a single brotherhood of worship and love – has been shaped and governed by the exposition which it receives from this epistle (Beare 1953, 605).

A General Description of the Epistle

There is a consensus among scholars that *Ephesians* reads more like a sermon than a letter in terms of its content, for it does not mention any specific item with regard to

the recipients of that letter that could suggest to us their *Sitz im Leben*. It is, however, regarded as a letter because it has a salutation (1:1-2), main body (1:3—6: 20) and final greetings (6:21-24). In addition, “the author has a certain group of persons in mind, for he speaks to them in the second person” (Martin 1970, 1105). In terms of the theme of the letter I tend to agree with Houlden when he says “a single motif embraces almost the whole of Ephesians – the unity which Christ has brought about: between heaven and earth, Jew and Gentile, man and woman, and above all, mankind and God, a unity made visible in Christ’s union with his Church” (Houlden 1977, 237-8).

The first three chapters, which are doctrinal and liturgical, enunciate the work of Christ on behalf of believers in terms of their redemption, which is aimed at indicating God’s purpose for the unity of the cosmos (1: 3-14) all in one long sentence. From verse 15 to 23 is a long prayer (what we may refer to as liturgical) that the recipients may perceive and appropriate all the blessings that Christ has procured for them. Chapter two resumes the doctrinal section by juxtaposing their former status and conduct as unbelievers with their new identity as a people of God. Through this explanation he brings in the idea of the unity, which Christ has forged between Jews and Gentiles through his death. Chapter three is liturgical in its second half (14-21) as he prays for the recipients to be firmly rooted in Christ. It is the first half of this chapter that has given scholars the impression that the letter was not written by Paul. In this first half (vv. 1-13), the writer seems to go to a great extent to impress his readers with the fact that he is privy to an otherwise well-hidden plan of

God, and as if he realizes what he has done, he goes to the other extreme affirming his unworthiness in verse 8.

The second half of the book (chapters 4 through 6) is mainly ethical; here Paul enumerates the conduct that is expected of the recipients as believers. While the first half of chapter 4 (vv. 1-16) makes a strong appeal and gives the *raison d'être* for unity, the remaining verses (vv.17-32) till chapter 6:9 are an exhortation on how to translate the Christian call into a worthy walk. The peculiar details of this walk are treated in chapters five and six in a household context. From the tenth verse of chapter six till the twentieth verse a different topic namely, spiritual warfare is treated. The last four verses of the chapter are final greetings.

A Sketch of *Ephesians*

Based on our discussion above, let us sketch a brief outline of the letter to the Ephesians.

- A. God's eternal purpose is the unification of all things under Christ 1:1-23
 - 1:1-2 Salutation
 - 1:3-14 Paul praises God for his blessings to the church
 - 1: 15-23 Paul prays for the church
- B. Unity between Gentiles and Jews is the mystery of Christ 2:1—3:21
 - 2:1-10 A recapitulation of the former status and conduct of the recipients
 - 2:11-22 Enmity between Jews and Gentiles is abolished in Christ
 - 3:1-13 Paul – the bearer of the gospel that unites Gentiles and Jews

3:14-21 Paul prays again for the church

C. Exhortation to a conduct that accords with God's choice of the recipients as

His own 4:1—6:9

4:1-16 Exhortation to preserve the unity within the Church

4:17—5:21 Exhortation for unity between personal conduct and profession of faith

5:22—6:9 Exhortation for unity within the household

5:22-33 Harmony between husbands and wives

6:1-4 Harmony between parents and children

6:5-9 Harmony between masters and slaves

6:10-20 Exhortation to engage in spiritual warfare

6:21-24 Final Greetings

Occasion, Purpose and Date of *Ephesians*

As mentioned variously above, this letter does not claim to be a response to a particular situation that arose within the church. It is, therefore, difficult to talk about the occasion that gave rise to it. From what we can glean from the other letters (*Colossians* and *Philemon*) that were sent by the hand of the same messenger, Tychicus, we may suggest that Paul wrote this general letter to the churches in Asia Minor while in Roman prison around A.D. 60-61 (Martin 1970, 1105). As Guthrie suggests, the letter may tell us more about the circumstances of the writer rather than that of the recipients (Guthrie 1975, 515). His position is that Paul while in prison had enough time to reflect and with no particular worries on his mind, his mind

turned to the theme of Christ and the Church. For those who deny Paul's authorship like Mitton the purpose of the letter was "to present the message of the recently assembled Pauline letters comprehensively to a new generation of Christians" (Mitton 1973, 29).

This writer has refrained from discussing the socio-historical context of Ephesus or the Ephesian Church because she is of the view that the letter was not specifically intended only for the Ephesian Church.

Introducing Ephesians 4:1-16

In reference to our discussion on the general description of the letter to the Ephesians, chapter 4 of this epistle carves a niche for itself as the beginning of the ethical section of this letter. The mood for exhortation is set by the connecting particle 'therefore' which links the previous three chapters to what follows. Paul issues a general exhortation to the recipients that they should conduct themselves in a manner that accords with God's choice of them as his people. He enumerates that this boils down to humility, gentleness, bearing with one another and maintaining unity. The theme of unity is then developed and linked to God's purpose for setting up ministers in the church. Unity remains a key term in this passage, for the church's unity is measured by the attainment of unity in faith and knowledge by the people. This writer, therefore, sees the unity of the church as the central theme of this passage. How, then, does this theme relate to the previous and following chapters of this epistle?

CHAPTER 1

The unity of the entire cosmos to the lordship of Jesus is the overarching theme of the book as found in chapter 1:10, 21,22

Chapter 2

Jesus accomplished unity between ethnically, socially and theologically diverse people, namely Jews and Gentiles, by his death on the cross

Chapter 3 (rationale for chapter 2)

This unity between such diverse groups of people is God's divine plan

Chapter 4:1-16

Diversity in the church should therefore be no surprise and no occasion for disunity, for it is just in line with God's plan and Christ's work. For this reason, unity should be eagerly maintained.

Chapters 4:17—6:9

The ethical implications of God's plan and Christ's work in relation to personal conduct and family life

Chapter 6:10-20

An exhortation to watch out in the present against evil powers that act in opposition to God's plan and Christ's work here on earth

Grammatical-Literary Context of Ephesians 4:1-16

Outline of Ephesians 4:1-16

The plea to work worthily vv. 1-16

The appeal is spelt out vv. 1-3

The appeal v. 1

How to walk worthily vv. 2-3

In humility and gentleness

In patience and forbearance

In unity

What is unity? vv. 4-16

Unity as oneness vv. 4-6

One body

One spirit

One hope

One Lord

One faith

One baptism

One God

Unity is demonstrated in the diversity of gifts that Christ bestows vv.

7- 16

Christ gives gift to everyone in the church vv.7-10

Christ gives gift v. 7

Attestation of scripture to this fact v. 8

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ

16. (Χριστος)
 εξ ου παν σωμα
 συναρμολογουμενον
 και
 θυμβιβαζομενον
 δια πασης αφης
 της επιχορηγιας
 κατ ενεργειαν
 εν μετρω
 ενος εκαστου μερους ποιεται την αυξησιν
 του σωματος
 εις οικοδομην εαυτου
 εν αγαπη

Syntactical layout in English

1. Therefore

I urge you

I, the prisoner in the Lord

to walk worthy

of the calling you are called

2. with

all humility

and gentleness

with

patience

enduring one another in love

3. keeping eagerly

the unity

of the Spirit in the bond of peace

4-6. one body

and one spirit

just as you were called to

one hope

when you were called

one Lord

one faith

one baptism

one God

and

father

of all

who is

over all

and

through all

and

in all

7. But

grace has been given to each one of us

as Christ apportioned it.

8.

This is why it says

he led captives in his train

**and gave gifts to human beings
when he ascended on high,**

9. What does “he ascended” mean
except that
he also descended to the lower earthly regions ?

10. He who descended
is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens
in order to fill the whole universe.

11. It was he
who gave
some to be apostles
some to be prophets
some to be evangelists
and some to be pastors
and teachers

12. to prepare God’s people
for works of service,
so that
the body of Christ may be built up

13. until
we all reach unity
in the faith

and

in the knowledge

of the Son of God

and become mature

attaining to the whole measure

of the fullness of Christ

14.

then

we will no longer be infants

tossed back and forth by waves

and

blown here and there

by every wind of

teaching

and

by the cunning

and

craftiness of men in their

deceitful scheming.

15.

Instead,

Speaking the truth in love

We shall grow up into him

Who is the head

That is, Christ.

Jesus. The phrase ὁ δέσμιος ἐν κυρίῳ is one of the indications that this epistle was written while Paul was in prison. I am taking the prepositional phrase ἐν κυρίῳ as a dative of cause (Blass 1961, 105) to read “the prisoner because of the Lord”. This is because, in addition to what we noted above concerning 3:1, 6:20 also tells us that Paul was in chains because of the gospel. The content of the plea is that the recipients should maintain a lifestyle that accords with God’s call on them.

It is pertinent at this juncture to look at some key terms in this verse. The verb περιπατεω which is usually translated ‘walk’ is commonly used by Paul in the Hebraic sense of “walk of life, more particularly in the moral sense” (Seesemann 1967, 944). A similar usage is found in 1 Thessalonians 2:12 “urging you, encouraging you and appealing to you to live a life worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and his glory” (NIV now and hereafter). The verb καλεω and its compounds is another key term not only in this verse, but in this passage. Its basic sense is ‘to call’ with nuances such as ‘to summon’ or ‘to invite’; for Paul, however, καλειν is a “technical term for the process of salvation” (Schmidt 1965, 489). Another word is ἀξιως, which has the sense of “bringing up the other beam of the scales, or bringing into equilibrium, and therefore, equivalent” (Foerster 1964, 379). So, the Ephesians are required to conduct themselves in a manner that accords with God’s invitation to them to partake in the salvation which He provides. The infinitive περιπατήσαι expresses the content of the verb παρακαλω; that is why I have indented it.

2. Generally, the preposition *μετά* “conveys the idea of accompaniment”, more so, when it is followed by a noun in the genitive case as we have it here (Porter 1994, 165). The conduct advocated by Paul in verse 1 is one that is characterized by humility and gentleness. The noun *ταπεινοφροσύνης* usually translated ‘humility’ owes its usage in this context to a Jewish background rather than a Hellenistic one. This is, because in Hellenistic usage ‘humility’ is disparagingly used to depict servility. In our context it is used as a virtue much like its use in Phillipians 2:3 to depict unselfishness “a subjecting of oneself to other” (Grundmann 1972, 21). Gentleness means “mild and gentle friendliness, the opposite of roughness, bad temper, sudden anger and brusqueness” (Hauck/ Schulz 1968, 646). The fact that ‘gentleness’ is linked to ‘humility’ by *καί* suggests that they are of equal status; I have, therefore listed them as coordinates along with patience, another virtue introduced by the same preposition. The noun *μακροθυμίας* is modified by the participle *ἀνεχόμενοι* to bring out the full meaning intended here. The participle *ἀνεχόμενοι* is taken as a modifier of *μακροθυμίας* which it directly follows. If it were intended to modify the preceding nouns as well, perhaps the preposition *μετά* would not have been repeated. The verb *ανεχω* has two basic senses “to receive, take up, bear and endure”; and “to restrain oneself” (Schlier 1964, 359). Both senses are not mutually exclusive for they depict “accepting someone, tolerating one’s neighbor” (ibid). I, therefore consider the participle *ἀνεχόμενοι* to be in apposition to ‘patience’. Lincoln in the same vein sees it as “an amplification of what is meant

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by patience” (Lincoln 1990, 236). So that we can say that ‘patience’ is manifested in enduring one another in love. These virtues may be seen as the context in which the worthy walk should be conducted.

3. While it is possible to see that keeping the unity of the Spirit is another constituent of walking in a worthy manner, I wonder whether this will do full justice to our text. In the light of the fact that the entire focus of this letter is unity so much so that it is the goal that will be realized in the eschaton (1:10), it is what Christ accomplished by his death (2:14), it is the plan of God hidden in times past (3:5-6), I wish to submit that Paul sees unity as the calling to which the recipients were called. Therefore, Paul’s exhortation that the recipients walk worthy of their call in 4:1 is in a sense only made explicit in verse 3 with verse 2 telling them how to accomplish it. (This position does not deny the fact that the exhortation to walk worthily applies to the others parts of the exhortation section). The infinitival clause in verse 3, therefore provides the purpose for the instruction in verse 2. This unity is one that originates from the Spirit and it should be maintained in the bond, which is peace. I am in agreement with Best who takes *της ειρηνης* as an expegetical genitive (Best 1998, 365).

4-6 The submission made above that the recipients were called into unity is attested by what we read in these two verses. Starting abruptly with ‘one body’ Paul expects his readers to supply the context in which it is applicable. As mentioned in 1:22-23 the church is the body, in 2:16 it is into this one body that both groups (Jews and

Gentiles) are reconciled. The recipients may, therefore note that the one body here is referring to the Church into which they have been called and the Spirit refers to the Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of their inheritance (1:13-14). The exhortation to maintain unity presupposes the existence of unity. The existence of unity is evidenced by the oneness that is characteristic of the gospel call. The gospel call is an invitation to one body to partake of one Spirit (see Eph. 2:18) the Christian hope of eternal rest with God is one, there is one Lord who is the Lord Jesus, one faith, for the focus of that faith is one person. One baptism which I am taking as water baptism that is the initiatory rite for all believers (Oepke 1964, 539) and one God (just in line with Jewish monotheism) who is above all and through all and in all.

7. I am taking δὲ as a mild adversative for the thoughts it introduces add a new twist to the discussion so far. Up till verse 6, the discussion on unity is about its oneness, but right from verse 7, the discussion shifts to its diversity. This discussion takes root in the change from ‘you (plural)’ to ‘each one of us’ in verse 7. This change in focus enables Paul to introduce the theme of unity in diversity. Both ἐνὶ and ἐκαστῷ are used to emphasize the distributive sense and not the collective sense in which reference is made to the members of the church/body of Christ. So each one of us (body of Christ/church) was given grace. Louw and Nida in their lexicon identify four senses in which the word χάρις is used: to denote kindness, gift, thanks and goodwill (Louw & Nida vol. 2, 262). In our context χάρις is used to denote gifts as gracious or generous gifts. This grace is given according to the gift of Christ. This

phrase ‘gift of Christ’ means the gift given by Christ (subjective genitive) as verse 8 clarifies.

8. Verse 8 introduces the quotation, which is the focus of interest in this paper. Suffice it to say here that Paul intends to use this quote to support his position in verse 7 that a gift has been given to each one of us by Christ. Since Christ is the source of these gifts there is an intrinsic unity in the diversity of the gifts – they all issue from him. There are many issues connected with this quotation and we shall examine them later in the paper.

9-10 These two verses serve as a running commentary on the quotation cited in verse 8 for they are meant to identify the referent of “he went up” as Jesus Christ. I have indented them so as to indicate their dependence on verse 8. “He descended to the lower (part) of the earth”, μέρη which is in parenthesis was probably not originally part of the text but was perhaps added as an interpretative gloss to guide how κατώτερα τῆς γῆς should be understood for it is not found in the oldest manuscript available. Scholars are basically divided into three positions concerning their understanding of this phrase. One position supported by A.T. Hanson and J.D.G. Dunn takes the reference of ‘descent’ in this construction as Hades. By this means, “the lower part of the earth” is taken as partitive genitive. While this position is plausible, for the comparative is sometimes used to denote the superlative as we find in Mark 4:31, the problem with this view is that the descent would be from earth to the lower part of the earth and not from heaven. In the same token, the ascent would

be from the lower part of the earth to earth. This would then be at variance with the quotation above, which these two verses are meant to explain. Another problem with this view is that it makes the discussion about a descent (which is not part of the actual quotation) irrelevant to the ongoing discussion on gifts. The second and third positions take the phrase “the lower of the earth” as genitive of apposition, that is, the descent is to the earth, which is lower than heaven. The second position, supported by Best, Barth and Mitton among other scholars, identifies this descent as the incarnation of Jesus. This position is supported by Phillipians 2:6-9 that describes Jesus’ incarnation as a humiliation. This is where the problem with this view lies: the idea of a descent *καταβαινω* seems odd to depict the incarnation. The proponents of the view are, however, quick to retort that the incarnation is not amply referred to in the scriptures to determine a consistent manner in which it is depicted. The third position, which commands the support of Caird, Martin, Houlden and Lincoln among others, identifies the descent as that of the exalted Christ in the Spirit. Unlike the other two positions that view the descent as preceding the ascent, this view sees the ascent precede the descent. This view, therefore, rejects a minority reading that adds *πρωτον* to the text suggesting that Jesus first descended before ascending. Of course, this reading is an interpretative gloss that was probably added by a scribe in order to smooth the reading, for it is not found in our earliest extant ancient manuscript. Yet, it is indicative of the manner in which this verse has been understood before now in some quarters. For the proponents of the third position, Jesus ascended to heaven and later descended in form of the Spirit giving gifts to the church. The advantage of this position is that it does not view verses 9-10 as a

digression but as part and parcel of the argument being made here. For, it ties in the idea of giving gifts – a discussion that starts from 7-8 with the running commentary in verses 9-10. One problem with this view is that the letter to the Ephesians is noted for its emphasis on Christ rather than the Spirit, though in many other Pauline writings both are not divorced from each other. This is especially noteworthy when we note that similar passages where the idea of gifts is mentioned such as in I Corinthians 12, the emphasis is on the Spirit as the giver. Perhaps the more formidable argument against this view is with regard to the actual quotation, which this verse is set out to explain. The quotation only talks about an ascent and does not mention a descent, this, in effect, means that the issue of receiving or giving gifts is attributed to an ascent and not a descent. In view of all these, I think that the second option that views the descent as the incarnation has the least problem.

11. After the explanation of how the quotation aptly describes Jesus, Paul goes on to enumerate the gifts which Jesus gave to men. As Best notes “vv. 9ff were in effect a commentary on the first line of the quotation in v. 8 and vv. 11-16 are a commentary on its second” (Best 1998, 388). Evidence for this is found in the repetition of the verb *ἔδωκεν*. A slight change is observable however in the description of the gifts. Instead of enumerating the different gifts given to each person, we see human beings given as gifts to the church as a whole. We may therefore notice that with this change, Paul has shifted focus from the constituting parts of the church, which he introduced in verse 7, to the church as a whole, although we of course note that the two are not mutually exclusive. With this focus on the church, some believers who

occupy or function in offices as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors-teachers are viewed as gifts to the church. Perhaps implied is the fact that none could occupy such offices without the gifts appropriate to function well in each capacity, so that the gifts “he gave to men” fit them for such offices or functions. The list in this verse however does not exhaust the gifts, which Christ gives to all believers. A more exhaustive list of gifts bestowed on believers is found in chapter 12 of 1 Corinthians. We may perhaps note that the ‘to human beings’ in verse 8 refers to believers.

12. The purpose for which the gifts were given is expressed with three prepositional phrases that have lent themselves to different understanding among scholars. The first prepositional phrase is introduced by πρὸς, while the remaining two are introduced each by εἰς. Some scholars like Lincoln take these phrases as coordinates (Lincoln 1990, 253), some like Mitton take the second prepositional phrase as subordinate to the first while the third is coordinate with the first (Mitton 1973, 151). I am in agreement with Best who takes the first prepositional phrase as the broad idea with each following prepositional phrase defining more clearly the preceding phrase (Best 1998, 395-399). This means that the ministers were primarily given as gifts with the purpose of equipping saints so as to enable them to participate in the work of service and by this means build up the body of Christ. To elaborate on this point, we may note that the noun καταρτισμὸν has the sense of “furnishing completely, or causing to be fully qualified” (Louw and Nida 1988, 680) and we may ask ‘fully furnished’ for what? Or ‘fully qualified’ for what? The next prepositional phrase gives us the answer: the believers are to be fully furnished or enabled for

work of service. But what does “work of service” entail in this context? The next prepositional phrase spells this out: “to build the body of Christ”. Louw and Nida have identified three basic senses of the noun οἰκοδομήν: “to make more able, to construct something, to build a structure”. I think that the first sense is in view here, for it implies “to strengthen” (Louw and Nida 1988, 677). We may, therefore summarize the task of these church leaders as to empower believers to work for the strengthening of fellow believers.

It is, perhaps, pertinent to mention at this juncture, my observation that the author of this epistle perhaps thinks in Hebrew though he writes in Greek (Khun 1968, 116 makes a similar observation). This is because in this writing, we sometimes have a series of prepositional phrases juxtaposed with no mention or hint of their relationship. Syntactically, one would take them as parallels or coordinating phrases but in terms of meaning one finds that such phrases do not mean much on their own unless subsumed under the preceding phrase. Such is what we find here where “work of service” is introduced by the same preposition as “building the body of Christ” as if work of service were divorced from building the body of Christ. We shall note more of this in this work.

13. The need for these gifts will continue until the whole church attains the goals set out in three prepositional phrases all starting with εἰς. These goals though listed with identical prepositions are not mutually exclusive. The first mentioned is to attain unity in respect to faith and in respect to knowledge of Jesus, the Son of God within

the church. It refers to unity in our knowledge or our understanding of the person and work of Jesus and to united faith in him. What does this boil down to? The next prepositional phrase explains that this means maturity, that is, the gifts will keep in operation until the whole church attains maturity or become as a matured person. Then the question is what is the standard to determine maturity? The next prepositional phrase explains: until the church attains a certain standard, namely, the full stature of Christ.

14. The result of the operation of these gifts is that the church will no longer be immature like babies. That is, the members will no longer be tossed back and forth as by the sea or blown here and there as by the wind of the teaching that is grounded or located in human trickery which is the sphere of cunning craftiness that leads to error.

15. Instead of the deception mentioned in verse 14, the church rather speaks the truth (perhaps the gospel) in the context of love. This will result in growth so that the church resembles Christ who is the head of the church/body. The noun κεφαλή is metaphorically used here to depict “leadership and ruling” (Ryken et al 1998, 368).

16. Each member of the body is joined together and knit together to Christ, who was described in verse 15 as the head of the body. Here, Paul brings to a climax the idea of diversity (mooted in verse 7 and to which the quotation was to lend support) as a complementary and necessary part of the unity that originates from the Spirit. Each

diverse part of Christ functions in a manner similar to the physical body. Each is intimately linked together and provides support for one another through the operation of the Spirit (ἐνέργειαν) and loving edification builds the whole body. We may note that although συναρμολογούμενον and συμβιβασόμενον are participles, they are acting as finite verbs in this context, for they are not modifying any verb, rather they are telling us how growth is effected in the body.

Let me recapitulate here, although I have classified the various points mentioned in verses 12 through 15 as purpose, goal and result, in a main sense all are intricately linked to the purpose for the gifts mentioned in verse 11. Verse 12 may be said to give very broad outlines of the tasks of the person-gifts (apostles, prophets and so on), that is, they are meant to empower believers so that each and every believer strengthens the other. This strengthening leads to maturity otherwise known as growth in the body of Christ. The implication of this is that the growth of the Church or body of Christ to maturity is not only attributable to the leaders, but is also attributable to the effect that the different parts of the body has on each other.

Paraphrase Translation of Ephesians 4:1-16

My dear people of God, on the basis of what I have said to you about who Jesus is and what he has done for you, I, the prisoner of the Lord appeal to you to live a life that authenticates the fact that you were really called to be God's own people. Let humility, gentleness, and patience characterize your relationship with one another as believers, these attributes will enable you to maintain the Spirit-induced unity that is

ours in the context of peace. Our unity is underlined by the fact that we are all called into one body, we all partake in one spirit, we all share one hope. Indeed we have one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God who is one father to all of us.

Apart from these commonalties are some diversities, indeed each one of us has been given different gifts by Christ. This is in accordance with what is written: “when he went up, he captured a host of captives and gave gifts to people.” I want you to know that the one who went up is Jesus, for he was the same one who came down. He is the very one who gave gifts such as Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and Pastors who are teachers to the church. These gifts were given in order that believers may be equipped for service, which is the strengthening of the body of Christ. This work of equipping saints shall continue until all of us attain united faith in and united knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The work goes on until the church as a whole attains maturity, which is measured by the full stature of Christ. The result of the operation of these gifts is the maturity of believers as they are no longer swayed by erroneous teachings, which issue from deceptive teachers. Each believer proclaims the truth in a loving manner and thereby the Church grows to resemble Christ who is its leader. Each member of the body of Christ is tightly linked through supporting ligaments and each member works according to the supernatural enablement provided by God to effect growth and in this way, the body builds up itself in love.

CHAPTER 3

PAUL'S USE OF PSALM 68:18 IN EPHESIANS 4:8

The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians

Scholars are unanimous that the writer of *Ephesians* is a Jew. One factor that led to this conclusion is his lavish use of the Old Testament. His use of the Old Testament spans allusions such as the mention of 'cornerstone' in 2:20, which is traceable to Isaiah 28:16, phrases such as "... peace, peace to those who are far and near" in 2:17, which derives from Isaiah 57:19, "speak the truth to one another" in 4:25, which derives from Zechariah 8:16, "in your anger do not sin" in 4:26, which derives from Psalm 4:4, " a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" in 5:2, which is based on Exodus 29:18 and Ezekiel 20:41. In two other instances Paul quotes full sentences from the Old Testament, which are quite different from the cases noted above where phrases or words in the Scriptures are used. The two instances are found in the household code: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" in 5:31 – a quotation of Genesis 2:24; and "honor your father and mother ... that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth" in 6:2-3 from Deuteronomy 5:16. In all the cases cited above, the use of the Old Testament was not introduced by a formula. Best argues that the reason for this is that the writer of Ephesians knew that his readers would recognize that he was making reference to scriptures in those instances (Best 1998, 78).

However, there are two instances in this letter (4:8 and 5:14) where Paul introduces the quotations with the formula *διο λεγει*. It is the use of an introductory formula that makes the following citation a quotation and not an allusion. The quotation in 5:14 is generally regarded by scholars to be part of a Christian baptismal hymn, for while it resonates a little with Isaiah 60:1, it is substantially different from it. For instance, the quotation in 5:14 mentions Christ and those who sleep, yet none of these are found in Isaiah 60:1. On the other hand, the quotation in 4:8 bears striking linguistic similarities to Psalm 68:18, but is different in its use of a different verb from what obtains in that psalm. Best, noting how the Old Testament is used in other passages in the epistle without an introductory formula, concludes that the author of Ephesians used “introductory formula in each case (4:8 and 5:14) to give authority to the passages whether his readers knew them or not” (Best 1998, 80). That is, the authority of these citations does not derive from scripture but from Paul’s usage. This is because without using the introductory formula the readers might not know that he was citing a source. Let us look more closely at this quotation.

The type and purpose of the quotation

The quotation in Ephesians 4:8 was intended to be understood as a direct quotation, given the fact that it is preceded by an introductory formula. This quotation is attributed to a source, which is not explicitly identified. What purpose does this quotation serve in this passage?

In the context of the first sixteen verses of chapter 4, the quotation is ably situated in the eighth verse – the middle of the unit of discourse. As noted in our outline of the passage, verses 1 through 6 deal with the main charge of the unit – walking worthy and how this is achieved through unity in the church. Verses 4-6 take up the theme of unity and discuss how the oneness observable in the Christian call serves as an indication of the existence and necessity for unity. Verse 7 introduces a different but complementary angle to the issue of unity – diversity. As we have noted in our text, Paul listed seven areas, all of them starting with ‘one’ that serves as evidence for the unity of believers. The impression this would create in the minds of the readers is ‘Yes! Our unity is greatly attested to by the oneness of our spiritual experience.’ With the introduction of another dimension to unity, that is, diversity in verse 7, Paul does not need any list of items that indicated their diversity, because it was, perhaps, an obvious fact. What he needed was authoritative evidence that commands the allegiance of his readers and that would enable them to see diversity in the context of unity. This is where our quotation comes in - it comes in to substantiate the claims made in verse 7. While scholars do not have problem in discerning the purpose of the quotation, a great controversy revolves round the identity of the source of the quotation, and to this we turn.

Identification of the source of the quotation in 4:8

There have been different reactions to the quotation in 4:8 in terms of its source. The principal cause of these various reactions is the fact that while the quotation closely resembles Psalm 68:18, yet, it is significantly different. A comparison of the quotation

in 4:8 with Psalm 68:18 in the Masoretic Text (MT afterwards) and the Septuagint (LXX afterwards) as laid out below bears this out.

Free translation

MT 68:19	LXX (Vaticanus 67:18)	Ephesians 4:8
You have ascended on high, you have led captivity captive; you have received gifts among men yes, among the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell there.	You have gone up on high, you have led captivity captive, you have received gifts for man, yes, for they were rebellious, that you might dwell among them	This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he led a host of captives captive and gave gifts to men

Hebrew Psalm 68:19

שְׁבִי	שָׁבִית	לְמַרוֹם	עָלִיתָ
captives	you took captive	to the heights	you went up
וְאַף סוֹרְרִים	בְּאֲדָם	מִתְּנוּת	לְקַחְתָּ
the stubborn even and	among men	gifts	you received
אֱלֹהִים	יְהוָה	לְשֹׁכֵן	וְאַף סוֹרְרִים
God	Lord	to dwell	the stubborn even and

LXX (Vaticanus) Psalm 67:18

Αναβας εις υψος ηχμαλωτευσας

Going up into (the) heights you captured

αιχμαλωσιαν ελαβες δοματα εν ανθρωπω

captive(s) you received gifts for/among man

και γαρ απειθουντες του κατασκηνωσαι

and for the disobedient of to dwell

Ephesians 4:8

Αναβας εις υψος ηχμαλωτευσεν

Going up into (the) heights he captured

Αιχμαλωσιαν εδωκεν δοματα τοις ανθρωποις

captive(s) he gave gifts to men

We can observe some differences in the change of the personal pronoun from the second person singular to the third person singular. We may also note that the quotation in Ephesians starts with the participial form of the verb αναβαινω as we find in LXX (Vaticanus). However, the most fundamental change is from the verb ‘receive’ in MT and LXX to ‘give’ in Ephesians.

Houlden, who sees Psalm 68:18 as the source of the quotation, is of the view that the author of Ephesians has deliberately altered the passage in line with Jewish methods of exposition, “which permitted modifications of the text when overriding ‘meaning’ dictated it” (Houlden 1970, 310). Mitton, however, disagrees with this view, for he found it difficult “to think of a Christian writer as quite deliberately changing (so as to reverse its meaning) a word of scripture to make it support his own contention” (Mitton 1973, 145). He, therefore, concludes “that it was an unintentional misquotation” (Mitton, 146). Best does not consider the quotation a mistake, but is of the view that the author of Ephesians has made a “massive alteration” both from the MT and the LXX. He goes on to ask “what degree of variation is acceptable in a citation from the OT if it is still to be regarded from the OT?” His conclusion is that the source of the quotation was not the OT “it is better to conjecture that AE himself did not alter the text but used a tradition known to him and his readers, though possibly it did not relate to Christ and the giving of gifts” (Best 1998, 77). Best had earlier noted the similarity between this quotation and the Rabbinic interpretation of Psalm 68:18 that is preserved in the Targum. However, knowing the late date of the Targum and the remote possibility of the Gentile readers’ acquaintance with it, Best posits a tradition which probably served also as source for the Targum as the probable source of the quotation in Ephesians. Longenecker views Paul’s use of the verb ‘to give’ instead of ‘to receive’ to be influenced by the existence of a then extant variant reading that switched the Hebrew radicals from לקח to חלק which means ‘to distribute’. This variant reading, he asserts, is found also in the Targum and the Peshitta (Longenecker 1999, 108). Lincoln anticipates Longenecker’s and Best’s views when he says that the author of Ephesians

was making use of “ an ancient rabbinic tradition which the Targum has also preserved” (Lincoln 1990, 243). Underlying this tradition may be the switching of the Hebrew radicals. Lindars attributes this change from ‘receive’ to ‘give’ to modification of text due to a deliberate alteration (Lindars 1961, 53). F.F. Bruce notes in parenthesis “it might be said that a conqueror having received ‘gifts’ from the defeated enemy, bestows them as largess on the spectators lining the processional route” (Bruce 1984, 343). Before we, however, conclude on this issue let us look at the use of Psalm 68:18 in some Jewish traditions.

The Use and Translation of Psalm 68:18 in Jewish Traditions and some Ancient Versions

Both Stott and Lincoln observe the use of Psalm 68 in synagogues at Pentecost: the Jewish festival that commemorates the harvest of wheat and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. It is in this light that the Targum identifies the one who ascended the heights as Moses in order to receive the law from God. The Targum states, therefore, that Moses gave the law as gift to the people. It is, perhaps, pertinent at this juncture to have a look at the Targum as quoted by Abbott:

Thou didst ascend to the firmament, Moses the prophet, thou didst take a captivity captive, thou didst teach the words of the law, thou gavest gifts to the sons of men (sic, Abbott 1970, 112).

What light does this shed on our text Ephesians 4:8? Some scholars like Caird, Stott and Lincoln have used the identification of Psalm 68 with Pentecost to suggest that Paul was quoting the verse in “reference to the Christian Pentecost to make a remarkable analogy” (Stott 1979, 157). That this psalm was designated in Jewish lectionary to be

read on the day of Pentecost, a day when the gift of the law was made to the Israelites seems to fit perfectly with Paul's use of the same verse to talk about gifts. This is noteworthy when we recall that according to Acts 2 the gift of the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost. It is no wonder then that Lindars sees this scripture as one of those that the early Christians used to root their understanding of the gift of the Spirit (Lindars 1961, 53). This observation or linkage, however, easily leads to a conclusion that is not supported by our text. For instance, Lincoln notes that since Moses in his ascension was reputed to have received not only the law, but also other heavenly secrets, Paul might be portraying Jesus in a "new Moses typology". The intention of Paul then was to show that "Christ has provided a link with the heavenly world that could not be matched by Moses" (Lincoln 1982, 19-20). However, there are no traces of an ongoing polemic or comparison with Moses reflected elsewhere in this letter to sustain such an argument. Moreover, we do not know enough of the contexts of these recipient churches to know what error Paul was trying to refute or if there was any error at all. In addition, it is surprising that Paul and Peter in all their discussions about gifts either in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12 and in Acts, did not use this Psalm as support for their claims, (we may note that this Psalm gets quoted only once in the NT and that is in our passage of study), if indeed it served to root the understanding of the early church about the gift of the Spirit. While argument from silence is not persuasive, in this instance, it might be helpful as a caution. In conclusion, while I do not dispute the use of this Psalm in synagogues as a lection on Jewish Pentecost, I am not convinced that this is the milieu in which Paul's Gentile readers would understand the import of this quotation.

Still talking about the use of this psalm in Jewish traditions, Barth, modifying Mowinckel's position, seems alone among New Testament commentators in asserting that this Psalm came to be sung during the period of the monarchy at the "enthronement of Israel's earthly kings to describe God's kingship" (Barth 1974, 474). He further explains that with the growing expectations of a Messiah, it was possible to ascribe the deeds of God in this Psalm to the Messiah. This scenario, therefore, paved the way for the adoption and the adaptation of this Psalm by Christians who saw Jesus as the Messiah. While this explanation does appear plausible, I only wonder that no other New Testament writer quoted this Psalm to authenticate the claim that Jesus was the Messiah.

Apart from Jewish interpretative writings such as the Targum, it is interesting to observe that some ancient versions of the Old Testament also make use of the verb 'give' instead of 'receive or take' in their translations. The Peshitta, which is the Syriac version of the Old Testament, the Sahidic and Boharic dialects of the Coptic language, the Ethiopic and the Arabic versions of the Old Testament all preserve this notable change. It is pertinent at this juncture to look at Psalm 68 more closely.

The Context of Psalm 68:18 (English)

Psalm 68:19 (Hebrew)

שְׁבִי	שְׁבִית	לְמַרְוֵם	עָלִית
captives	you took captive	to the heights	you went up

בְּאֲרָם	מִתְּנוּת	לְקַחְתָּ	
among men	gifts	you received	
אֱלֹהִים	יְהוָה	לְשֹׁכֵן	וְאֵף סוֹרְרִים
God	Lord	to dwell	the stubborn even and

Psalm 68 has been described as the “most difficult and obscure of all the Psalms” (Dahood 1968, 133). This is on account of the textual and exegetical problems that are associated with the Psalm, and the apparent disjointedness of its discourse. Furthermore, “more than fifteen words and expressions in this Psalm do not appear elsewhere in biblical literature” (Tate 1990, 170). However, we may observe that Psalm 68 starts on a note of request with the Psalmist desiring and pleading that God may act against His enemies (who presumably were the enemies of the people of God). From verse 4, the Psalmist praises God as he recounts what God did for His people, Israel individually and collectively, as he led them across the wilderness. He mentions the victory which God gave his people as he marched like a captain ahead of them defeating the armies of their enemies. Verse 18 which closely resembles the quotation in Ephesians 4:8 is cast between an acknowledgement of God’s transition from Mount Sinai to the sanctuary located atop Mount Zion and his ascension as a warlord with captives as his entourage. It is as He ascends the mount that the issue of receiving gifts arises. The Psalmist continues in verse 19 to extol God and exude the assurance that he will defeat his

enemies. The splendour of the temple is also extolled as the Psalmist notes that kings would bring gifts to the Lord at his temple in Jerusalem.

From the above, we may note that the controlling theme of this psalm in relation to our quotation is the ascription of a warrior motif to God. It was God's success as a warrior that made him receive gifts.

What, however, is the identity of these gifts? I wish to submit that, in the grammatical context of this passage, it is possible to conceive human beings as the gifts. This submission is based on a number of factors. One of which, is the fact that the preposition ל, which has a semantic range of 'from', 'among', 'on', 'in', 'with' and so on could also serve as an object marker for the verb לקח (DCH II, 86b; BDB 88d 7) . Taking this preposition as an object marker opens up to us the other possible meanings of this preposition which the other senses do not adequately exhaust. For instance, the translation of the preposition ל as 'from' really means 'away from', having a sense of source, and thus suggesting the receiving of material items from the people. Another sense of the preposition is 'among' and this is used in a partitive sense to denote 'being in a multitude' and therefore translates into "he received gifts among a multitude of men". This is quite ambiguous for it could mean that men were the gifts or that he took gifts from men. Taking the preposition ל as an object marker also logically follows the exegetical decision to take the phrase "you took humanity as gifts" as an explication of (or to be in apposition to) the preceding phrase "he captured captives" (cf. Judges 5:12).

This decision to take humanity as the object of the verb ‘to take’ is also supported by the observation that the noun phrase “even the rebellious” with a prepositional and verbal ellipsis is dependent on the preceding phrase, and is, therefore, an instance of the humanity that were received as gifts. However, verse 29 of Psalm 68 favors the concept of material things as gifts. With this, let us now summarize our findings on the most probable source of this citation in Ephesians 4:8 in a chart. The chart does not make mention of the ancient versions noted earlier, because they are all too late to serve as source for Ephesians. For the earliest of them was probably the Peshitta, which could not be earlier than 150 A.D. – (the date of the inauguration of the church), and this is much later than the writing of *Ephesians*. However, the interpretation preserved in the Peshitta, much like what we have in the Targum, could possibly be earlier than the actual date of its writing.

A COMPARISON CHART OF SOME OF THE AVAILABLE SOURCES (TEXTS) OF THE QUOTATION

	MT	LXX	Eph	Targum
Recipients of the gift			church	Israel
Action	receive	receive	give	give
Identity of gift	tribute*	tribute*	humans	Torah
Subject of the action	God	God	Christ	Moses
Analogy	warrior	warrior	Lord	law-giver
Destination	sanctuary	sanctuary	heaven	Mount Sinai

*It is grammatically possible to conceive humans as the gift in these texts.

From this chart, it seems obvious that the only reason why some scholars suggest the Targum or the tradition behind it as source for the quotation in Ephesians is primarily because of the use of the same verb in both instances. Otherwise, the description in Ephesians is closer to what we have in MT and LXX than in the Targum for it is more common to equate Christ with God than with Moses. What does this suggest? Scholars expect a verbatim or an identical reproduction of the original in a quotation. This is quite understandable because Paul has in most cases followed a verbatim reproduction of citations as much as possible. In addition, this expectation agrees with our modern penchant for exactness and precision. It is interesting to note that there is a modern day theory that sees the use of quotations in a different perspective. Relevance Theory brings a different perspective to the use and purpose of quotation, and we shall do well to take note of it.

Relevance Theory's view on quotations

This theory basically states that *relevance* is the basic principle that governs communication and cognition between a speaker and a hearer or reader (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 46ff). The hearer or reader expects the speaker to utter what is relevant to her, for only such would justify the speaker's engagement of her attention. The speaker also expects the hearer to anticipate that his utterance to the hearer or reader is relevant.

Quotations fall under the purview of metarepresentation in pragmatics, because they (quotations) are representations of other persons' utterances (Noh 2000, 6). Someone else's utterance may be represented literally or interpretively. The main point of

departure between the two is the degree of resemblance. A literal, otherwise known as metalinguistic representation, is a formal representation, which we may refer to as an identical or verbatim reproduction of the original. This is because it has a one on one correspondence with the original with regard to form and syntax. An interpretive representation, on the other hand, is one where the new speaker makes use of an existing utterance in the light of his own interpretation of it within the new context of occurrence (Noh 2000, 73). The degree of resemblance may be more or less loose depending on the optimal relevance he wants to achieve. If *relevance*, as aforementioned, is what constrains interlocutors in communication and cognition, and it was what informed the use of ‘give’ instead of ‘receive’ in the Targum, then, to what extent does this serve as a constraint on Paul in his use of this quotation in the letter to the Ephesians? This we shall look at in the next section, but before then, how is *relevance* assessed?

There are two indicators for assessing the degree of the relevance of information, these are: *cognitive effects* and *processing effort*. Processing effort is the mental effort employed to process information in order to facilitate the intended meaning of an utterance. This boils down to a formula: the greater the processing effort, then the less relevant is the information. Cognitive effect, on the other hand, is the effect that new information brings to our understanding or knowledge of a concept when it interacts with the assumptions previously held about that concept (Noh 2000, 62). New information may act to strengthen a previously-held assumption, contradict and therefore eliminate it or combine with the assumption to yield a contextual implication.

The equation here is that the greater the cognitive effects the greater the relevance. Therefore, taking the example of the Targum, Jewish interpreters, due to their concern for observance of the Torah, a concern shared by many other Jews, perhaps, found that Psalm 68:18 would yield more cognitive effects for their audience when applied to Moses with less processing effort. In essence, in the bid to intensify the use of the torah, it was more relevant to see the height as Mount Sinai, the gift as the Torah rather than tribute or people and the ascender as Moses. Do we by means of Relevance Theory then accept all interpretations as legitimate as long as they are relevant? By no means, for the control lies in the fact that a quotation must bear a logical resemblance in terms of content to the original (Noh 2000, 73). By this, the quotation must share the same contextual implication or give rise to the same implicature as the original. We may then ask, in what way do we have a correspondence between the original context of the quotation and the new context of use in Ephesians? However, this question presupposes the resolution of the question of the original source of the quotation; let us turn briefly to this.

Resolving the Issue of the Source of the Quotation

If Paul used this quotation in verse 8 to authenticate his claim in verse 7, then the veracity of that claim hinges on the credibility of that quotation. This, then, brings us to the issue of the credibility of the quotation. The quotation would be considered credible if it bears a logical resemblance to the original. It is the working hypothesis of this work that Ephesians 4:8 bears logical resemblance to Psalm 68:18. For this reason, we shall take Psalm 68:18 as the basic source of this quotation. This is, because, even for those

who see the tradition behind the Targum as the source, it is pertinent to note that such a tradition must essentially encode an interpretation. Such an interpretation was, perhaps intended to make the words of the Psalm *relevant* to the contemporary audience in view. Moreover, to the Gentile recipients of this letter, the Old Testament in Greek would be their first acquaintance with the word of God and there are enough linguistic correspondences between this quotation and their Bible to give them a fair idea of the source of the quotation. It is to this extent that we should take Psalm 68:18 as the basic source of this quotation. We are now at liberty to probe the resemblance between the original context of Psalm 68:18 and the quotation in Ephesians 4:8.

Correspondence between the original context and the new context of use

That the changes Paul adopted in the quotation in Ephesians 4:8 are very relevant for his purpose in the passage is undisputed by scholars. For, without the change from ‘receive’ to ‘give’ the whole quotation would not have made sense in the new context of use. For as Best notes, verses 11ff serve as commentary on the second line of the quotation. This comes out clearly in the retention of the verbal phrase *ἔδωκεν* in verse 11 where he applies the quotation of ‘gifts to men’ to ‘men as gifts’. Paul then goes on to give a list of the gifts and in verses that follow he discusses the purpose, result and goal of such gifts. In addition, there is consensus among scholars that Paul was quite focussed in that he made use of only what was relevant to his purpose from the original verse. For, while many scholars went on to discuss the identity and nature of the captives, Paul was not so distracted. Yet, to what extent can we allow the exigencies of relevance to override the concern for faithfulness to an authoritative writing?

Two of the notable changes Paul made are his identification of Jesus as the one who ascended the height (heaven) whereas the referent of $\alpha\nu\alpha\beta\alpha\varsigma$ in M.T and Septuagint was God, and the change from ‘receive’ to ‘give’. The identification of Jesus as God is nothing peculiar to Paul but is a characteristic of the early church as evidenced in John 1:1 “in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God” with the subsequent identification of Jesus as the word. That the Jewish concept of the Messiah was adopted, and modified with the event of the resurrection to result in the identification of Jesus as Lord, which corresponds with the name adonai – the name of Yahweh, is undisputed by scholars.

The main bone of contention is how Paul (or the tradition he was using) was able to arrive at the verb ‘give’ instead of ‘receive’. Of note is the fact that in the original context of Psalm 68:18, the subject who ascends the mount is a warrior. As a warrior who conquered his enemies, it was appropriate that he should receive tribute from the defeated foes. Of all the portraits of the historical Jesus, perhaps the most inappropriate is portraying him as a warrior. In all the four gospels, he is portrayed as non-militant. While he could have serious disputes with the Pharisees or Sadducees, yet, this never bordered on military conquest. The closest portrayal of Jesus as a warrior is what we have in Colossians, where he is depicted to have conquered principalities and powers (Col 2:15). Yet, this portrayal is not one that could make Paul attribute to him the seizure of booty/spoils of war. Therefore, the new context of use makes it imperative that for the sake of relevance in communication and cognition, what is needful is not a literal reproduction of the original but an interpretive one. How, then does this come in

to play and yet resemble the original in content? And are we suggesting, by any means that scriptures be trifled with just for the sake of relevance? It is the contention of this thesis that working with the Hebrew text sheds light on our understanding of Paul's use of the verb 'give' instead of 'receive' and that he did not trifle with scriptures.

The Use of the verb לקח in the Old Testament

Seebass has this to say about the verb לקח 'to take' "the verb designates the initiative for subsequent action, ...it is frequently used to anticipate a subsequent verb that actually describes the intended act" (1997, 17-18). It is in the light of this that one notes, with interest, the fact that the verb נתן 'to give' is the most frequently used verb in association with לקח (DCH IV, 572) they occur together about seventy-eight times in the Old Testament. Of importance to us are instances where God is the subject or where the context is associated with warfare. Few examples of these are:

Genesis 48:22 "and to you, as one who is over your brothers, I give (נתן) the ridge of land I took (לקח) from the Amorites with my sword and my bow"

Deuteronomy 29:8 "We took (לקח) their land and gave (נתן) it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh"

Joshua 11:23 "So Joshua took (לקח) the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses, and he gave (נתן) it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions."

2 Samuel 12:11 "This what the Lord says: 'out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take (לקח) your wives and give (נתן) them to one who is close to you ..."

1 Kings 11:35 “I will take (לקח) the kingdom from his son’s hands and give (נתת) you ten tribes”

Do we dare suggest then, that the usage of the verb לקח in the original makes possible Paul’s use in Ephesians?

It is germane to our discussion at this point to look at what we may consider a key term in the texts; this is the word ‘gifts’, which occurs in all the texts in focus. The word *δομα* translated gift occurs thirty-nine times in the Septuagint but occurs only four times in the New Testament. Its use in the Septuagint captures the offer of gifts to God, gifts given or received by humans, the Levites as gifts to God, inheritance as gifts, offer of gifts to king or from king. In all these usages it is only in the book of Ecclesiastes that we see two instances of “gift from God”. This, however, does not suggest that the idea of God giving gifts is alien to the Old Testament. We may also note that the idea of *δοματα* ‘gifts’ as humans is not alien to the Old Testament for Levites are seen as gifts to God in Numbers 18:6.

We shall now take time to look into the socio-cultural dynamics of warfare in some relevant contexts, and it may not be far-fetched to see the linkage between the receiving of gifts or booty of war and the giving or distribution of the same among soldiers and clients.

The Socio-cultural cum Historical analysis of the warrior/conflict motif

Ancient Near Eastern Literature

In the accounts of the conquests won by Egyptian or Babylonian or Assyrian kings, it is noticeable that tributes were given by opposing kings to avert war and as a token of their submission to the superior king. Booty or spoils of war were taken by the conqueror where actual war took place. The spoils of war would include people or war prisoners, chariots, donkeys, camels and whatever possessions the defeated foes had. In Sennacherib's account of the war he waged against Jerusalem, he had this to say:

I made to come out from them 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, innumerable horses, mules, donkeys, camels, large and small cattle, and counted them as spoils of war. ... his (Hezekiah's) towns, which I had despoiled I cut off from his land, giving them to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Sillibel, king of Gaza, and so reduced his land. (Wiseman 1961, 67)

While it is common knowledge that these accounts are often exaggerated, for our purposes, we may still find in them a reliable witness of the practices of their time. In the instance cited above, we have evidence that spoils of war are shared among friends or clients, especially those who supported the victor at the expedition. In another instance, king Kamose of Egypt while concluding the account of his victory over the Asiatics says "My soldiers were as lions are, with their spoil, having serfs, cattle, milk, fat, and honey, dividing up their property, their hearts gay" (Wilson 1969, 223).

Old Testament

Examples that readily come to mind about warfare and distribution of booty of war is that of Abram when he went in arms against the king of Elam, and his cohorts, who had

captured his nephew, Lot. On his return from the war, the king of Sodom had asked Abram to keep the goods but give him the people. Abram refused to keep the goods but asked that the men who went with him to war be given goods (Genesis 14:17-23). In Judges 5:30, we find a similar scenario when Deborah depicts the mother of Sisera, who was the captain of the army of Canaan, as musing to herself that the soldiers working with her son must be finding and dividing the spoils and sharing the ladies (Judges 5:30).

I Samuel 30: 26-31 has an account of how David shared among his friends and well-wishers the booty he got from the Amalekites. In Judges chapter 8 verse 21, we have an account of how Gideon killed the kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunnah and took the ornaments on their camels. In verse 24 of the same chapter, Gideon asks the Israelites to give him some of the ear-rings they got from the plunder. Verse 26 specifically mentions that some of the gold items were the chains from those that were taken from the camels of Zebah and Zalmunnah. Here is a clear case of the taking of spoils of war (v. 21) with no mention of the fact that it was ever shared out. It is not until we get to verse 26 that we may fit the pieces together that the ornaments, which Gideon took from the camel's necks ended up in other Israelites' hands. We may then supply the action that was passed over, the action of sharing the booty of war. We may then ask, why was the distribution of the booty not mentioned? Was it a case of not mentioning the obvious? Was it a forgone conclusion in that culture that there was no need to make an explicit reference to it, unless something unusual happened after it?

Qumran Community

The sectarian community that inhabited the South Western shore of the Dead Sea could be regarded as an eschatological community. For, believing that God had chosen them as the true Israel, the remnant, they isolated themselves from other Jews, whom they regarded as defiled, and all forms of impurity, and kept strict purity rules. They believed that Yahweh had entered secretly into a covenant with them and had revealed his mystery to them. They spent their time meditating on His words, writing their own commentaries and keeping themselves pure, awaiting a time when Yahweh would intervene in history. At this historic time, Yahweh would lead them as Sons of Light in battle against Belial and the Sons of Darkness, who were not just the pagans but also included other Jews who were not members of their community. This war would culminate in the end of this present evil age and the dawn of a new age where peace would reign and evil be forever banished. The document that treats the conduct of war is the War Scroll that was found in cave 1 with some fragments found in cave 4.

For our purpose, we shall note column 12, line 10 through 12 that say:

Get up, hero, take your prisoners, glorious one, collect your spoil, worker of heroic deeds ... Fill the land with glory and your inheritance with blessing: herds of flocks in your fields, gold,/ silver,/ and precious stones in your palaces! (Martinez 1994, 106).

This means that, the Qumran covenanters in line with the culture of their day expected that as victors, they would take spoils of war.

New Testament period

While we may note that the world under Roman rule in the first century was largely at peace thanks to Pax romana, the fact that slaves constituted about one-third of its

population serves as a pointer to its past conquests. In addition, the existence of socio-cultural dynamics of patronage-brokerage, better known perhaps, as patron-client relationship served as witness to the manner in which the booty of office was shared. While we have no evidence to directly link this socio-cultural norm to warfare motif, one wonders whether it is not one of the last vestiges of the military past of imperial Rome. This linkage is brought to the fore in Josephus's description of his relationship with Vespasian and his son, Titus. Evidently, a patron-client relationship was afoot, for among other things Josephus was given some portion of the conquered Judea (The Life of Flavius Josephus, 76). This suggests that in the first century the distribution of spoils of war was still a common phenomenon.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have looked at Paul's use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8 and have reached the conclusion that it is the basic text underlying the quotation. We examined the grammatical as well as the socio-cultural context of the Psalm in order to reach this conclusion. It has become clear that the problem of scholars about the source of the quotation is their expectation of verbatim reproduction of the original quotation. Relevance Theory has helped us understand that our representation of other people's utterances may be metalinguistic or interpretive. One of our findings in this chapter is that Paul's quotation of Psalm 68:18 is interpretive. This chapter has let us see the legitimacy of such an interpretive use of scripture for we have seen that it does full justice to the socio-cultural as well as grammatical use of the word and the context in question. We acknowledge the possibility that Paul himself could have been responsible

for the change from 'receive' to 'give' or he could have been quoting an interpretive tradition found in variant texts that are no longer extant. In the following chapter we shall employ the insight gained from our discussion in this chapter to discuss the normativeness of Paul's use, and note its implications for preaching and teaching today.

CHAPTER 4

THE NORMATIVENESS OF PAUL'S INTERPRETIVE METHOD IN EPHESIANS 4:9-10

Introduction

In chapter 3 of this work we looked at the quotation cited in Ephesians 4:8, and we also noted that the change from 'receive' to 'give' in the quotation suggests an interpretation of the source passage, Psalm 68:18. We concluded that this interpretation was logical in view of the socio-cultural context underlying war motif in the passage and in the first century. It was, therefore, in accordance with the common understanding of the people of the first century. We may, therefore, conclude that knowledge of context was basic to the change observed. In addition to verse 8, the following verses, 9 and 10, are equally important in uncovering Paul's interpretive method. This is because they constitute Paul's own brief interpretation of the quotation or better still Psalm 68:18 in this new context of usage. It is, therefore, the concern of this chapter to investigate Paul's commentary on the quotation as found in verses 9 and 10 with the intent of identifying Paul's method of interpretation, and noting the implications this may have for preaching and teaching today. Yet, even here, there is no consensus, for Longenecker is of the view that not only the citation, but also the commentary that follows it did not originate with Paul (Longenecker 1999, 108). His reason is that the manner in which both are cast suggests that they were traditional ideas within Early Christianity and not "Pauline creations". While we may admit the possibility of the quotation not originating with

Paul, for the introductory formula suggests that he was quoting some other authority, there is no firm basis on which one can reject the commentary as Pauline creation. It is for this reason that we shall take the commentary in verses 9 and 10 as Pauline creation.

The interpretive method employed in Ephesians 4:9-10

Scholars are not unanimous in their understanding of the interpretive method at play in verses 9 and 10. Barth sees the commentary as displaying *literalist midrash*. Here *midrash* simply means interpretation and not a body of rules applied for the interpretation of Biblical passages. Unfortunately, Barth does not define what he means by a literalist interpretation, but Longenecker does and we now turn to him for an explanation. According to Longenecker, literal interpretation is one where “scriptures are understood in a straight-forward fashion, resulting in the plain, simple, and natural meaning of the text being applied to the lives of the people” (Longenecker 1999, 15). He acknowledges this interpretation as “woodenly literal” and gives the example of how Deuteronomy 21:18ff is interpreted. In this passage, the parents of a rebellious son are required to lay hold on him, bring him out and disclose his stubbornness to the community. The interpretation goes ahead to say that if the parents were maimed in the hand, they would not be able to lay hold on him, so also if they were lame, they would not be able to bring him out. If they were dumb, they would not be able to disclose his stubbornness to the community, for these reasons such a son could not have the force of the law applied on him since the necessary steps could not be taken by his parents because of their disability. If this is

what goes on in a literal interpretation, then one wonders how Barth reached this conclusion that the commentary in verses 9 and 10 displays literal interpretation. Hendriksen brings this point home when he notes concerning verses 9 and 10 of Ephesians chapter 4,

the logic is not immediately clear. An ascent does not necessarily presuppose a previous descent. The fact, for example, that Elijah ascended to heaven does not mean that he had previously come down from heaven, ... Paul is not stating a general law here. (Hendriksen 1979, 191-2)

Therefore, I do not support Barth's thesis that literalist midrash is at play in this commentary. F.F. Bruce, on the other hand, identifies the interpretive method at play in the commentary as *peshet*. This he defines as the explanation given on a biblical text word by word or phrase by phrase (Bruce 1984, 343). This method was characteristic of the Qumran covenanters, who as Bruce pointed out in earlier work, applied selected passages to themselves as if such passages referred exclusively to them, and therefore had no significance before their time (Bruce 1960, 16-17). We can obviously identify a "this is that" type of interpretation in the commentary found in verses 9 and 10. But does this mean that Paul felt that the original passage referred exclusively to Jesus and therefore had no significance before then? I doubt this, but think that Paul is seeing Jesus as the fulfillment of this scripture. We shall return to this discussion later. However, the categorization as *peshet* is rather too broad to yield to us the peculiarities of the method employed. For, while a 'this is that' formula tells us that an inference is being made, we are at a loss to know the issues under consideration that led to this conclusion. It is for this reason that we need to look beyond the *peshet* form in order to get an insight into what made Paul reach the conclusion introduced by 'this is that'. Longenecker, another scholar to make an

observation on this commentary, appears quite undecided on what to make of the commentary. This is because at one point he considers that Paul was employing a “Jewish type of argument based on inference – a rabbinic type of inference, indeed, but probably not specifically rabbinic – in support of the incarnation and ascension of Christ” (ibid). For this reason, we shall leave him out of this discussion. On the other hand, Lincoln identifies the running commentary on the quotation as found in verses 9 and 10 as *midrash* (Lincoln 1990, 244). Concerning midrashic interpretation Longenecker has this to say:

Midrashic interpretation ostensibly takes its point of departure from the biblical text itself ... and seeks to explicate the hidden meanings contained therein by means of agreed on hermeneutical principles in order to contemporize the revelation of God for the people of God (Longenecker 1999, 22).

In addition, he notes that there are two basic types of midrash depending on the type of material being treated. One is *midrash halakah* and the other is *midrash haggadah*. The former deals with legal materials, while the latter deals with non-legal materials. Furthermore, he notes that midrash haggadah tended to be more fanciful than midrash halakah. Lincoln in an earlier work specifically noted that the midrash in view here is the *haggadic* type (Lincoln 1982, 25). Let us look more closely at it, for though codified later, Rabbinic haggadic interpretation bears witness to earlier interpretive practices such as existed in the first century.

Talking about Rabbinic haggadic interpretation, Strack and Stemberger following Heinemann identify two categories of haggadic interpretation. One is *creative historiography*, this is described as the filling out of “biblical narratives by supplying

details, identifying persons, drawing an anachronistic picture of the living conditions of biblical characters, attributing to the latter a knowledge of the entire Bible, and of the future, resolving contradictions, linking the details of narratives by analogy etc” (Strack and Stemberger 1992, 260). The second category is *creative philology*. This “uses an argument from silence to interpret not only repetitions of words and sentences, but also the absence of expected details” (ibid). The natural question is, “what category of midrash haggadah is at play in this commentary?” It seems to me that the two categories of haggadic interpretation coalesce in verses 9 and 10 of Ephesians 4. This is because the commentary was used to identify the referent of the ‘one who ascended’ in the quotation – a characteristic of creative historiography. In order to achieve this, Paul expounds on a key term in the quotation; ‘ascent’. While ascent does not necessarily imply a descent, Paul seems to argue from the silence of the text about a descent to imply one. As we would recall, arguing from silence is a characteristic of creative philology. It is, however possible that there is a proverbial saying behind this idea of ascent-descent that suggests that whatever goes up must come down. Whatever the case, Paul undoubtedly identifies the one who ascended with the one who descended. This time, the locale of the ascent was no longer a mountain, but heaven. If the psalm had earlier been interpreted to depict Moses’ ascent to the top of the mountain, Paul’s new interpretation (of one who ascended into heaven) leaves his readers without any doubt that he was referring to Jesus.

In summary, we have observed that Paul’s commentary on the quotation cited in verse 8 of chapter 4 of Ephesians is *pesher*. This is because he directly infers that the

referent of the action described in the quotation was none other than a figure who existed historically after the original account in Psalm 68. In addition, we noted that to reach this conclusion, Paul employs the silence of the text on ‘descent’ the antonym of ‘ascent’ to make this inference. We have identified the logic at play here as one that is characteristic of midrash haggadah.

The Normativeness of Paul’s Use of Scripture and Exegetical Methods

The question we want to answer in this section is: how normative is Paul’s use of scripture and method of interpretation? This boils down to the following questions: To what extent can we argue from silence today? To what extent can we infer that an event or subject of an action in Scripture refers to an actual event or person in our contemporary world? To what extent can we incorporate our interpretation of scripture into the body of Scripture as Paul seems to have done?

Perhaps, a question bigger and more important than method is purpose, for the latter presupposes the former. Methods are by nature culturally-conditioned for they need to make sense to a given audience. Moreover, methods are not an end in themselves, but are means to an end. It is, therefore, pertinent at this juncture to look at the purpose which these methods of interpretation were meant to serve in this passage. As Longenecker has observed, the overriding concern of New Testament writers was not interpreting Scripture for its own sake. Rather, they were concerned with interpreting or locating the Christ-event within the context of God’s revelation in history as captured in Israel’s Scripture. That is, Scripture was used to explain or

advocate that the Christ-event occurred in fulfillment of Scripture (Longenecker 1999, xxvii). Yet here we cannot take anything for granted, for the word ‘Scripture’ is not by any means univocal. We need to constantly remind ourselves that what we regard as Old Testament is indeed the whole of Scripture for Early Christians. To them, Scripture “recorded God’s whole plan, purpose and character” (Hanson 1974, 138), and the need to portray the Christ-event as fulfillment of Scripture arose from this understanding. Since Christ was seen as the crown, climax or the full realization of God’s plan for the salvation of humanity, it made sense that they should look closely into their Bible to find out the clues embedded all over Scripture pointing to this climax. We may, therefore, conclude that Paul, as well as other New Testament writers had the task of creating a niche for the Christ-event in continuity with God’s past dealings with His people, Israel. For this reason, Paul with others, perhaps, knew that there was no way they could start out with scriptures and end up with Jesus as its fulfillment. Therefore, much like the Qumran covenanters, they sought to interpret the Christ-event and related experiences in the light of scriptures using methods that would enable them achieve their purpose. In what ways then are Paul’s method or use of Scripture normative for us today? To answer this question, we need to be clear about the purpose for which today’s interpreters engage in the task of interpretation. This is a pertinent question, for we have noted earlier that method is not the basic question in exegesis, purpose is. Let us address this in the following section.

The Task of Preaching and Teaching Today

While there are many uses which interpretation of Scripture could be applied, of outstanding importance are the tasks of preaching and teaching. They are important because they bring the word of God within the reach of the generality of the people. So that we can say that preachers and teachers mediate the word of God to the people. Preachers and teachers use the word of God for different purposes. It is used to establish doctrines, it is used to address contemporary problems and issues and also to establish God's will in different situations that confront God's people. While there are many ways advocated for the reading of Scripture today, I want us to look at two readings: reader response and authorial intention as conveyed by the text. Reader response reading acknowledges that interpretation is a result of an interaction between a text and a reader, where one is missing we cannot have interpretation. In addition, this reading asserts that a reader comes to the text from a certain social context with certain viewpoints, presuppositions and aims, and that these exert influence on the reader in terms of his/her interpretation of the text. The implication of this is that there are as many interpretations or meanings of a text as there are readers. As Tate says:

Not only do reader-response critics reject the idea that a text is an autonomous object, they also reject the idea that readers are autonomous, free to read as they please. Readers are always submerged within social-contexts exerting profound influences. An individual's entire social context and degree of involvement within that social context profoundly affect the way that person will actualize the text, what questions will be put to the text, and how that individual will perceive and fill in the gaps presented by the text. The end product of this dual indeterminacy (of text and reader) is a plurality of interpretations. (Tate 1991, 194).

However, the main advantage of this reading is that it highlights the significance of a text in a contemporary context. The second reading which borders on authorial intention as mediated through the text has been commended for many reasons. It enables us to take seriously what the author chose to write down and the form in which he chose to write it in order to convey meaning. This means that the text itself introduces controls that safeguard the meaning of the text. In a reader-response reading the meaning of a text varies from one reader to another and there are absolutely no controls for there is no right or wrong meaning. An authorial-intention-centered reading necessarily means that we take the text seriously in terms of the purpose for its writing, its context and word meanings. It is also one sure means to discern the intention of the author. To take a text as one directly addressed to us today unmediated is to pretend that things are exactly the same now as they were several centuries ago. For this reason, the task of interpreters is to read a text in the light of its context and access the meaning it held for its original audience. It is after this that a contemporary preacher or teacher may deduce the significance it has for his/her contemporary audience. Even in situations where a preacher is driven to scripture because of a contemporary issue, allowance must still be given to the text to speak its own voice and only then can we hear it speak to our contemporary situation. So to answer the question: what is the task of preaching and teaching today? I would say that the task of preaching and teaching today is to faithfully enact the word of God so that it reaches the people unhindered and evokes a similar response as in the original audience.

Implications for Teaching and Preaching Today

From the aforesaid, we can note that contemporary preachers and teachers basically share some presuppositions with Paul or NT writers generally: the sufficiency of Scripture to serve as the grid through which we interpret events in our contemporary world. We both seek meaning for our world from the word of God. For this reason, both groups engage in on-going dialogue with Scripture so as to apply insights gained from it to our contemporary world. Our methods must necessarily differ because of the different times and cultures in which we both live. But as we have mentioned earlier, method is not the big issue, the big issue is the purpose to which we apply the method. This purpose is in part dictated by the task committed to us, this is what I consider to be the major point of departure between contemporary and early interpreters.

An emerging religion that first appeared as a sect within Judaism that shared the same holy Book as first-century Judaism had the task of self-definition. It owed it to itself and to mother-Judaism to define itself as part and indeed the climax of God's on-going dealings with His people in history. It needed to see itself in continuity and discontinuity with God's past acts of redemption within history. It is no surprise then that methods were perhaps the least on the minds of its protagonists. They had a task to perform to enable all and sundry see the Christ-event and related events as fulfillment of Hebrew Scripture.

It appears to me, then, that preachers and teachers today have a different task from the New Testament writers. It is no accident that letters written to mixed congregations consisting of Jews and Gentiles or predominantly Jewish communities have more Old Testament citations and allusions. As the gospel moved away from its original Jewish setting, there was less need to elucidate the fulfillment theme of the Christ-event. The task of preachers and teachers today is to faithfully declare the truth of Scripture with the intent of bringing out its original meaning and then move on to bring its significance to our contemporary world.

In spite of these differences, what can we learn from Paul's use of Scripture? One basic principle we can glean from Paul is the importance of context for a good understanding and use of Scripture. Learning as much as possible about the context (literary, cultural and grammatical) of a passage of Scripture is a basic principle that is well-demonstrated in the Ephesian passage where Paul's claim that Christ gave diverse gifts to the church led to the citation found in Ephesians 4:8. This citation has been found to include an *implicit midrash* – "an interpretation is woven into the citation" (Ellis 1977, 202). From our investigation we found that this interpretation is admissible on the basis of context. The modern tendency to lay emphasis on memory verses wrests verses out of their context and unwittingly leads to the assignment of meanings not supported by the text. A look at Paul's citation in Ephesians 4:8 is a clarion call to context.

One way in which we may, however, not use Scriptures today is in arguing from the silence of the text. What I mean is that where the text is silent about an issue, we should not now make it a major point of discussion to generate some new meanings. Concerning our text, I have noted earlier the possibility that Paul's argument about a 'descent' though not explicitly mentioned in the original text, might be informed by an extant proverbial saying that links an ascent with a descent. If this was the case, then context is still the decisive factor here. However, in the absence of our knowledge of such proverb or wise saying, it is perhaps wise to point out this possible pitfall as caution. An example of this pitfall was demonstrated to me as I watched a TV preacher. He was using the story of Martha and Mary as an illustration of the fact that having focus over limited areas of life makes one more productive. In this particular illustration, he mentioned how Martha was concerned about many things while Mary chose to be concerned over few things in the words of Jesus. He then said that Martha was bothered with cooking for Jesus when Jesus never said that he was hungry. He drew from this illustration an insight that the congregation should never do anything that the Lord never asked them. Looking back at this particular aspect of the preaching, it is obvious that the text does not mention anything about Jesus being hungry or not, so the preacher in question made use of the silence of the text to propound a teaching. Secondly, this preacher illustrates what we can do to the text when we do not know enough of the context. In fact, Mary would have been scolded by other Jews for being discourteous to a guest and that is what Martha expected Jesus to do. Like in many parts of Africa, a guest does not need to say he is hungry before food is prepared for him, that is part and parcel of the hospitality of

the people. Not knowing the cultural context of first century Palestine and its environs have often made Martha appear as the one in the wrong. This inevitably alienates us from the impact which this story would have had on first century readers.

Conclusion

To recapitulate briefly, we may note from our study so far that Paul did not set out to do an exegesis of Psalm 68:18, (although this does not suggest that he did not interpret texts). In the Ephesian passage, Paul's claim that Christ gave diverse gifts to the church led to the citation found in Ephesians 4:8. This citation has been found to include an implicit interpretation woven into the citation. His intention was to use the quotation to support his claim in verse 7. Perhaps, aware of other interpretations of the psalm (which of course did not acknowledge Jesus as the referent), Paul sought to make his readers understand that the referent of the ascent was Jesus. In order to do this, and without the need to mention names, Paul identified the one who ascended with the one who descended. The interpretation proffered by Paul in verses 9 and 10 would lead his reader to see Jesus as fulfilling Scripture, and in this manner serve a Christological function. While Paul's use of Scripture and method are legitimate within his context and useful for his purpose, we are not called to emulate them in the detail of use. On our part today, our task is to draw meaning out of Scripture and not to draw meaning into Scripture. This task is better accomplished the more of the context we know given the gap between our cultures today and that of the people described in the Bible. For this reason, every preacher and teacher

needs to have access to whatever socio-cultural cum historical aids they can get. This will enable us be more faithful proclaimers of the word of God. It is for this same reason that archaeology will continue to have an important contribution to Biblical Studies both as an academic and faith-building discipline.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In chapter 1 we laid out the basic outline of this work, in terms of the assumptions and presuppositions that underlie this work. In chapter 2 we looked closely at the passage under investigation with the intent of laying out the context of its occurrence. This culminated in our exegesis of the passage. In chapter 3, we concentrated our study on the quotation found in verse 8 of Ephesians chapter 4. To this extent we discussed the issue of the possible source of the quotation and decided to take the source as Psalm 68:18. In addition, we investigated the reason for the change from the verb ‘receive’ to the verb ‘give’ and concluded that the change was not arbitrary, but it was brought about by a thorough knowledge of the context of the original passage. We found that the quotation possibly included Paul’s own interpretation of the original passage. In chapter 4, we looked at Paul’s commentary on the quotation as found in verses 9 and 10 of Ephesians chapter 4. We investigated the exegetical dynamics at play in this commentary and found that the methods employed were peculiar to the task of interpretation in the first century and that they were conditioned by the exegetical culture of that time. In answering the question of normativeness of Paul’s use of Scripture, we found commendable his knowledge of the context of the original passage. We, however found that arguing from silence as he did, while acceptable in his time, is not recommended today. This is because of the inherent danger this poses for the interpretive task. It removes the constraint imposed by the text and makes the text amenable to the whims and caprices of any

interpreter. Since our task in interpretation is vastly different from that of our predecessors, for there is no climatic occurrence within history that demands to be in necessary continuity with God's past acts of salvation, we have no justification for resorting to such methods. Secondly, such methods are not acceptable in our time. Finally, as preachers and teachers of the word of God like our predecessors, we need to fully depend on the Holy Spirit to activate the word in our hearts and our preaching and teaching today.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL DETAILS

NAME ABIOLA IBILOLA MBAMALU

MARITAL STATUS MARRIED

CONTACT ADDRESS C/O BOX 24686, 00502 KAREN

e-mail evangiema@yahoo.co.uk

phone-numbers 0733247054

0722903185

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

B.Sc International Relations, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. 1986

M.A. Translation Studies, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. 2000.

M.Th. Biblical Studies. Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. 2003.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Registry Department, The Polytechnic Ibadan. 1989-1997.

VOLUNTEER WORK, ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

Student member of Society of Biblical Literature.

Student member of International Pragmatics Association

Home Bible Study, Children's Bible club.

HOBBIES

Music, singing.