

**Christ is risen!**

**THE CASE OF THE MISSING PROPHET**

The Orthodox Christian Scriptures —Part Three  
By Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

We have written in a previous article ("The Neutralization of the Netherworld") that the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament represents an ancient and authentic Hebrew tradition. Due to the fact that there were variances in the Hebrew texts, the textual tradition that the Septuagint translation presents often differs widely from the Masoretic Hebrew text of today.

But there are also some surprises.

In very ancient times, it seems some anonymous rabbis felt that they needed to take some liberties with the sacred texts, mostly — it appears — out of embarrassment. For example, in the Book of Judges, we are told that the children of Dan fell into idolatry (Judges 18:30-31). This is what the Septuagint says:

And the children of Dan set up the graven image for themselves; and Jonathan, the son of Gerson [Gershom], the son of Manasses, he and his son were priests to the tribe of Dan till the time of the carrying away of the nation [literally: the land]. And they set up for themselves the graven image which Michaias [Micah] made, all the days that the House of God was in Selom [Shiloh].

This, essentially, is what the Masoretic says also. The only problem here is that Gerson [Gershom] was not the son of Manasses. He was the son of the Prophet Moses! How embarrassing! The grandson of Israel's most prominent prophet fell into idolatry! This is what author Charles D. Provan (*Christian News*), May 7, 2007) writes:

...The rabbis themselves wrote that they deliberately changed some passages [of the Old Testament]. Among the most definite [changes] is Judges 18:30 where the rabbis admit they changed the text from Moses to Manasseh in order to protect Moses!\*

The teachers of Israel felt this fall on the part of the grandson would cast reproach on the reputation of the great Moses, so they changed the name. The translators of the Septuagint inherited this variant in the text they were given, and so they faithfully rendered this ancient rabbinical redaction into Greek.

So, two cheers to the translators of the Septuagint for their fidelity to the text they received.

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\* For more on this, see [cnmail@fidnet.com](mailto:cnmail@fidnet.com)

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## The Case of the Missing Prophecy

### The Orthodox Christian Scriptures — Part Four

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, we read the following prophetic passage:

And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. Get up, he said, and take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him. So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet:  
OUR OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.

(Matt. 2:12-15)

Many Protestants believe that this prophecy is found in the Old Testament book of the Prophet Hosea (chap. 11, verse 1). But this cannot be true. Why? If you read the Hosea passage in its entirety, you realize that this particular passage is speaking about God's *disobedient* son, the nation of Israel. This cannot be said of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

There is only one Old Testament passage that clearly fulfills all the qualifications for being the prophecy that the Gospel of St. Matthew is referring to. That is Numbers 24:2-9, *in the Septuagint text*:

And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and sees Israel encamped by their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him. And he took up his parable and said: Balaam says to the sons of Beor, the man who sees truly says, He who hears the oracle of the Mighty One speaks, who saw a vision of God in sleep; his eyes were opened: How goodly are thy habitations, Jacob, and thy tents, Israel! as shady groves, and as gardens by a river, and as tents which God pitched, and as cedars by the waters. There shall come a man out of his seed, and he shall rule over many nations; and the kingdom of Gog shall be exalted, and his kingdom shall be increased. *God led him out of Egypt*; he has as it were the glory of a unicorn: he shall consume the nations of his enemies, and he shall drain their marrow, and with his darts he shall shoot through the enemy. He lay down, he rested as a lion, and as a young lion; who has stirred him up? They that bless thee are blessed, and they that curse thee are cursed.

One scholar writes, "...Though the sojourn [in Egypt] may be obtained in the Masoretic text, yet it is much easier to derive it from the Greek version. Indeed, that Number 24 is a Messianic prophecy is so obvious that it jumps of the page, as does the Egyptian sojourn of the Messiah."

And also:

Notice also that one name [of our Saviour] in the New Testament is The Lion from the Tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5). Though there are Messianic prophecies in which it is stated that Christ would come from the Tribe of Judah, I am aware of none which refer directly to Christ as a Lion, except the Numbers 24 prophecy of Balaam. This is obtainable from the Masoretic text, but is unavoidable in Greek.

Two and half cheers for the Septuagint text!

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### **The Case of the Missing Verse**

#### The Orthodox Christian Scriptures — Part Five

Psalm 144 (Ps. 145 in the Masoretic text) is an "acrostic Psalm" in Hebrew, that is, each of its verses begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. But there is a problem in today's Hebrew Masoretic text. The verse that should begin with the Hebrew letter "N" is missing.

At the same time, people have noted that in the Greek version of the Book of Psalms (i.e. the Septuagint text), there is an "extra" verse where the missing letter "N" should be in the Hebrew text. By "reverse translating" this verse from the Greek back into Hebrew, the verse begins with the missing letter "N"!! Furthermore, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, the ancient Hebrew text of the Psalms had the verse exactly where the Septuagint had it.

In the Septuagint, the so-called "extra" verse is:

Faithful is the Lord in all His words,  
and holy in all His works

(Ps. 144:14)

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, the so-called "missing" Hebrew verse says:

God is faithful in His words,  
And gracious in all His deeds.

Three cheers for the Septuagint!!

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### **The Case of the Missing Feast**

#### The Orthodox Christian Scriptures — Part Six

The Jewish people love the feast of Hanukkah. It is their answer to Santa Claus and Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer.

But there is a little problem here. The Feast of Hanukkah is *nowhere to be found* in the present-day Hebrew Scriptures. *Oy!* Well, where can we find it? You guessed it: It is based on an oral tradition which, in turn, takes occasion from an incident found *only in the Greek Septuagint text!!!* — the First Book of Maccabees (4:36-59).

Yes, the feast that is one of the most beloved for the Jewish people today is found *only* in the sacred Scriptures used by the Orthodox Christian faithful, the New Israel.

**Happy Hanukkah to all!**