The Septuagint in the New Testament

General Observations

The following table provides a summary overview of New Testament quotations from the Old Testament. Twenty-four Old Testament books, listed in the first column of the table - Genesis through Malachi - , are quoted in sixteen New Testament books - Matthew through 2 Peter -, named in the top row. The row in blue provides the total number of quotations from the Old Testament in each New Testament book. In addition, this line shows the total of all verses in the Old Testament books quoted, the total number of quotations (320), and the frequency of quotations for those books taken as a whole. Thus, for the 24 Old Testament books listed, the average frequency of quotations is 18.0 per every thousand verses. Of course, if the entire Old Testament were taken into account, the quotation frequency would be much lower. To include verse counts from books not quoted (Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Chronicles, etc.) would, however, ensnare us in the question of the Old Testament canon, which is outside the scope of the present investigation.

As a guide to reading the table, note that the book of Genesis has 1508 verses and is quoted 31 times in the New Testament. The number of quotations from Genesis, divided by the number of verses in that book and multiplied by 1000, yields 20.6 - implying that Genesis was a bit more popular with New Testament authors than the average Old Testament book. Continuing along the "Genesis" row, we see that four of these quotations appear in the book of Acts, and nine in Romans. Looking along the columns, observe that the book of John quotes the Old Testament only 14 times - the least of any gospel. John quotes the Psalms 7 times, Isaiah 4 times, and Zechariah twice. (Fractional quotations will be explained shortly.)

Book	# of verses	# of quot.	Quot. freq.	Mt	Mk	Lk	Jn	Acts	Rom	1 Cor	2 Cor	Gal	Eph	1 Tm	2 Tm	Heb	Jam	1 Pet	2 Pet
Total	17,764	320	18.0	54	27	26	14	40	61	17	10	10	5	1	1	37	4	12	1
Genesis	1508	31	20.6	2	2	-	-	4	9	2	-	4	1	-	-	6	1	-	-
Exodus	1213	31.33	25.8	4.33	3	2.5	0.5	11	3	1	1	-	0.5	-	-	3	0.5	1	-
Leviticus	859	15.33	17.8	3.83	2	2	-	1	2	-	0.5	2	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
Numbers	1288	2	1.5	0.5	-	-	0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Deut.	927	43.33	46.8	10.3	6.5	5.5	-	3	7	2	1	2	0.5	1	-	4	0.5	-	-
1 Samuel	810	1	1.2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 Samuel	694	2.5	3.6	-	-	-	-	-	0.5	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
1 Kings	816	2	2.5	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Job	1070	2	1.9	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Psalms	2461	76.5	31.1	9	5	7	7	11	12.5	3	2	-	2	-	-	16	-	2	-
Proverbs	915	6	6.6	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	1
Isaiah	1292	65.5	50.7	11	4.5	6	4	5	18	6	2	1	-	-	-	2	-	6	-
Book	# of verses	# of quot.	Quot. freq.	Mt	Mk	Lk	Jn	Acts	Rom	1 Cor	2 Cor	Gal	Eph	1 Tm	2 Tm	Heb	Jam	1 Pet	2 Pet
Jeremiah	1364	5	3.7	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Ezekiel	1273	1.5	1.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Daniel	356	5	13.7	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hosea	186	7	37.6	3	-	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Joel	73	2	27.4	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Amos	146	2	13.7	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jonah	48	1	20.8	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Micah	105	2	19.0	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Habakkuk	56	4	71.4	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Haggai	38	1	26.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Zechariah	211	7	33.2	3	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malachi	55	4	72.7	1	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1: Quotations Overview

Some additional remarks about the table: (1) the reader may notice that fractional quotations are listed. The reason for this is that in cases such as Matthew 5.33 and 5.38, multiple Old Testament books contain the same quotation. Since it is impossible to tell which book is being quoted, each is given partial credit. For instance, Matthew may have had Exodus 21.24, Leviticus 19.12 or Deuteronomy 19.21 in mind in Matthew 5.38. Each Old Testament book is thus given one-third credit.

(2) The verse count for each book is based on the Authorized Version. The Septuagint will have different verse counts for some of these books. It was my judgment that the variation in book length between the Septuagint and Hebrew-based English translations would be an insignificant factor. The greatest discrepancies will be for Jeremiah, Daniel and Job, books not particularly popular with New Testament authors.

(3) Many of these 320 distinct quotations are of the same Old Testament passage. For instance, each time the author of the book of Hebrews quotes Psalm 95.7, it is counted as a separate citation.

Notice that fifteen Old Testament books from the Hebrew canon are not quoted at all: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Obadiah, Nahum, and Zephaniah.

Of those that are quoted, Psalms and Isaiah are the most popular, followed by Deuteronomy and Exodus. These four books show good strength of usage across the span of New Testament books. Eighty-two percent of all Old Testment quotations are from just six books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Psalms and Isaiah.
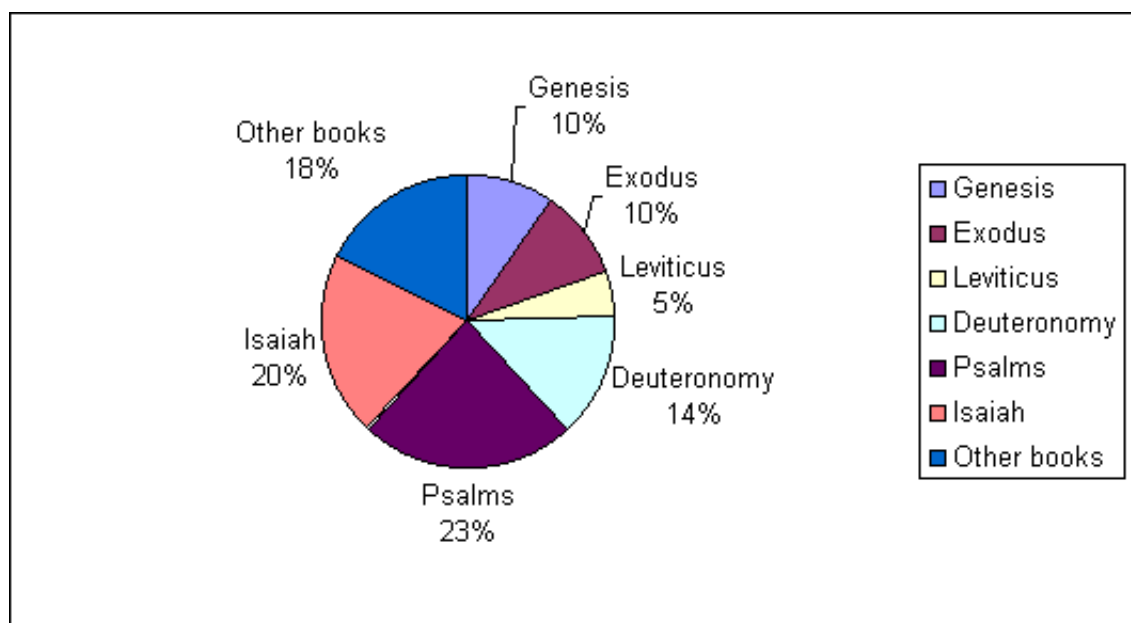

Figure 1: Distribution of Quotations from Old Testament Books

If the size of the Old Testament books is taken into account, one realizes that the tiny works of Malachi and Habakkuk were very rich with meaning for the New Testament authors. When popularity is measured in this way, Isaiah and Deuteronomy come in third and fourth respectively. Hosea is fifth and Zechariah sixth.

Other observations: almost 1/3 of the quotations in Romans are from Isaiah, while 43% of the quotations in Hebrews are from Psalms. Matthew and Luke rely on the books of the Law for almost 40% of their quotes (this jumps to 50 % with Mark), but John avoids the Torah almost completely, concentrating instead on Psalms, Isaiah and Zechariah.

Ezekiel, a relatively large book, is quoted only one and one-half times in the New Testament. It has the lowest quotation

frequency for any book actually referenced.

<div align="center">Agreement with the Septuagint</div>

Methodology

The basic set of quotations for this study was furnished by the "Index of Quotations" in Aland, Karavidopoulos, Martini and Metzger's *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition, published by the United Bible Societies. Hereafter, I will refer to this source as UBS. I was unable, however, to see any connection between 2 Samuel 7.8 and 2 Corinthians 6.18, listed in UBS as a quotation, so I deleted this item from the set. Two additional exceptions: UBS presents Mt 21.5 as a single quotation from two sources - Isaiah 62.11 and Zechariah 9.9. It seems clear, however, that this should be viewed as two non-overlapping quotations, since Isaiah 62.11 simply provides an opening phrase which the quotation from Zechariah follows. In addition, UBS views Luke 4.18-19 as a quotation from Isaiah 61.1 alone. However, since Luke has introduced a line from Isaiah 58.6 into the midst of that quotation, I have followed suit.

I must say that several of the quotations in the Index hardly seem like quotations at all. In addition, several passages which seem fairly clearly to be quotations (Daniel 11.31/12.11 in Matthew 24.15/Mark 13.14; Isaiah 66.24 in Mark 9.48; Sirach 4.1 in Mark 10.19; Jeremiah 11.7 in Mark 11.17; Isaiah 53.12 in Mark 15.28; Malachi 4.5-6 in Luke 1.17; Psalm 62.12/Psalm 24.12 in Romans 2.6; Isaiah 8.12 in 1 Peter 3.14; Psalm 2.8, 9 in Revelation 2.27; Isaiah 22.22 in Revelation 3.7; and others) are missing from the Index. I was tempted to scrub the list of quotations of questionable entries (Deuteronomy 25.5 is a good example) and augment it with more worthy ones. However, employing an objective set of quotations provided by an outside source bolsters the objectivity of the work. In addition, the questionable quotations and the candidates for inclusion appear not to influence the overall conclusions in any significant way.

For each quotation, I have prepared a side-by-side comparison of the New Testament and Septuagint Greek texts. To add clarity, and to provide an opportunity to assess agreement with the Masoretic Hebrew text, I supplemented this primary Greek comparison with Brenton's English translation of the Septuagint, and the Old and New Testament passages in the English of the 1901 American Standard Version. My own comments appear at the bottom of each page. The comparison format is described in more detail here.

(One word of caution: I am no expert in Greek. With tools such as those provided at the Perseus Project web site, I can translate New Testament and Septuagint passages. However, I have little to no familiarity with Hebrew. Thus, I have relied on a variety of translations - and the definitions given in *Young's Analytical Concordance* - to assess the meaning of the Masoretic text.)

As I proceeded to prepare side-by-side comparisons for the quotations, I noticed a tendency on the part of New Testament authors to deviate from the exact wording of the Septuagint, though they often kept the same sense, or applied the text in a novel way. For instance, they would change the person and/or number of a verb to suit their purposes. Strictly speaking, these were usually deviations from both the Hebrew and the Septuagint; thus, these deviations seemed of no consequence in the evaluation of the influence of the Septuagint on the New Testament. However, there were cases where the Septuagint and the Hebrew differed in meaning, and the New Testament followed one against the sense of the other.

I determined, therefore, to categorize the comparisons in two separate ways. First, I would assess the meaning of the texts, and evaluate the degree of agreement: where the Septuagint and the Masoretic text differ in meaning, did the New Testament author follow the sense of the Septuagint against the Hebrew, or did he follow the Hebrew against he Septuagint? Second, I would assess the degree to which the New Testament author employed poetic license in his use of the Septuagint.

Assessment of Agreement in Meaning

The New Testament authors show a clear preference for the Septuagint over Masoretic readings. The following table provides a selection of thirty of the more significant New Testament deviations toward the Septuagint. The second column shows the New Testament wording, and the rightmost column has the wording from the Hebrew Old Testament. In each case, the New Testament author is true to the Septuagint. Red is used to highlight differences between Hebrew and Greek. All quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

New/Old		

Testament Reference	New Testament/Septuagint	Old Testament/Masoretic Text
Matthew 1.23/ Isaiah 7.14	"Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us).	Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.
Matthew 12.21/ Isaiah 42.4	"and in his name will the Gentiles hope."	and the coastlands wait for his law.
Matthew 13.14-15/ Isaiah 6.9-10	"For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes they have closed"	Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes
Matthew 15.8-9/ Isaiah 29.13	"in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men."	and their fear of me is a commandment of men learned by rote
Matthew 21.16/ Psalm 8.2	"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast brought perfect praise"	by the mouths of babes and infants thou hast founded a bulwark
Luke 3.4-6/ Isaiah 40.3-5	"and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."	and all flesh shall see it together
Luke 4.18-19/ Isaiah 61.1-2	"to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind"	to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound
Acts 7.42-43/ Amos 5.25-27	"And you took up the tent of Moloch, and the star of the god Rephan, the figures which you made to worship"	You shall take up Sakkuth your king, and Kaiwan your star-god, your images, which you made for yourselves
Acts 8.32-33/ Isaiah 53.7-8	"In his humiliation justice was denied him, Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken up from the earth."	By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living
Acts 13.41/ Habakkuk 1.5	"Behold, you scoffers, and wonder, and perish"	Look among the nations, and see; wonder and be astounded
Acts 15.16-17/ Amos 9.11-12	"that the rest of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name"	that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name
Romans 2.24/ Isaiah 52.5	"The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."	Their rulers wail, says the LORD, and continually all the day my name is despised
Romans 9.27-28/ Isaiah 10.22-23	Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them shall be saved"	For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return
Romans 10.20/ Isaiah 65.1	"I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me"	I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me
Romans 11.9-10/ Psalm 69.22	"Let their table become a snare and a trap, a pitfall and a retribution for them; let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs for ever."	Let their own table before them become a snare; let their sacrificial feasts [Heb. - *for security*] be a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they cannot see; and make their loins tremble continually
Romans 11.26-27/	"The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will	And he will come to Zion as Redeemer, to those in

Isaiah 59.20-21	banish ungodliness from Jacob"	Jacob who turn from transgression
Romans 11.34/ Isaiah 40.13	"For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"	Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as his counsellor instructed him?
Romans 15.12/ Isaiah 11.10	"The root of Jesse shall come, he who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles hope."	the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the peoples; him shall the nations seek
Heb 1.6/ Deut. 32.43	"Let all God's angels worship him."	*The MT omits this quotation*
Heb 2.6-8/ Psalm 8.4-6	"Thou didst make him a little lower than the angels"	thou hast made him a little less than God
Heb 2.13/ Isaiah 8.17	"I will put my trust in him."	I will hope in him
Heb 3.15/ Psalm 95.7-8	"Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."	O that today you would hearken to his voice! Harden not your hearts, as at Meribah
Heb 8.8-12/ Jer. 31.31-34	"for they did not continue in my covenant, and so I paid no heed to them, says the Lord"	my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD
Heb 10.5-7/ Psalm 40.6-8	"Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired; but a body hast thou prepared for me"	Sacrifice and offering thou dost not desire; but thou hast given me an open ear
Heb 10.37-38/ Hab 2.3-4	"and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him."	Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail [Heb. - *is puffed up*]
Heb 11.21/ Genesis 47.31	"By faith Jacob ... bowing in worship over the head of his staff."	Then Israel bowed himself upon the head of his bed
Heb 12.5-6/ Prov 3.11-12	"For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."	for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights
James 4.6/ Prov 3.34	"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."	Toward the scorners he is scornful, but to the humble he shows favor
1 Pet 2.22/ Isaiah 53.9	He committed no sin; no guile was found on his lips	although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth
1 Pet 4.18/ Prov 11.31	"If the righteous man is scarcely saved, where will the impious and sinner appear?"	If the righteous is requited on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!

Table 2: Sample New Testament Quotations of the Septuagint

Matthew relies on the Septuagint for the assertion that the Messiah's mother was to be a virgin (Matthew 1.23). Jesus himself follows the *traditional* Septuagint wording in condemning the Pharisees' traditions (Matthew 15.8-9). The Septuagint clearly prophesies that Jesus will heal the blind (Luke 4.18-19) - but the Masoretic text is more obscure. The Septuagint foretold that the Messiah's death would be unjust (Acts 8.32-33) and that the Gentiles would seek the Lord (Acts 15.16-17). The Hebrew has the nations being "possessed" along with Edom. Paul knows that a remnant of Israel will be saved because he was reading the Old Testament in Greek (Romans 9.27-28). Perhaps if his topic were the return to the Holy Land and not salvation, he would have found the Hebrew reading more suitable. Following the Greek, he knows that the Messiah will conquer his people's sin - not that he would come to those who had already cleansed

themselves from sin, as the Hebrew would have it (Romans 11.26-27). Paul's thought that Jesus would rule the Gentiles also depends on a Septuagint reading (Romans 15.12). The author of the book of Hebrews - to prove the deity of Christ - proclaims the truth that Jesus is worshipped by *all* the angels of God (Hebrews 1.6). But the Hebrew Old Testament does not contain that verse. Also on the basis of the Greek Old Testament, that author asserts that the incarnation was prophecied (Hebrews 10.5-7) - that Jesus would have a body, which he would offer for our sanctification (Hebrews 10.10). The Masoretic text at this point stresses auditory capability. Finally, where the Masoretic text described a nonviolent suffering servant, the Septuagint prophesied a sinless Messiah (1 Peter 2.22).

The Table of Quotations in New Testament Order contains a column entitled "Meaning." Some quotations are annotated in this column with a "J," an "H" or a "D." A "J" indicates that the quotation agrees with the Septuagint agains the sense of the Masoretic text, an "H" that the quotation supports the Hebrew sense against the Septuagint. The quotation is marked by a "D" when the quotation disagrees in meaning with both the Septuagint and the Hebrew. The following table summarizes the disagreement of the New Testament with the Septuagint as a source. The general structure of the table is the same as Table 1 above. For each New Testament book, the number of quotations from each Old Testament book is shown, but the number of times the New Testament reading differs in meaning from the Septuagint text - both "H" and "D" readings - is also indicated. Thus, Matthew differs in sense from the Septuagint 9 times out of 54 quotations. Three of these disagreements occur when Matthew quotes from Isaiah. Looking along the rows, note that Deuteronomy is quoted against the sense of the Septuagint 7 times, two of these quotations occurring in the book of Romans.

Book	# of quot.	Mt	Mk	Lk	Jn	Acts	Rom	1 Cor	2 Cor	Gal	Eph	1 Tm	2 Tm	Heb	Jam	1 Pet	2 Pet
Total	22.5/320	9/54	3/27	2/26	1/14	0/40	3.5/61	2/17	0/10	0/10	0/5	0/1	0/1	1/37	0/4	1/12	0/1
Genesis	0/31	0/2	0/2	-	-	0/4	0/9	0/2	-	0/4	0/1	-	-	0/6	0/1	-	-
Exodus	0/31.33	0/4.33	0/3	0/2.5	0/0.5	0/11	0/3	0/1	0/1	-	0/0.5	-	-	0/3	0/0.5	0/1	-
Leviticus	0/15.83	0/3.83	0/2	0/2	-	0/1	0/2	-	0/0.5	0/2	-	-	-	-	0/1	0/1	-
Numbers	0/2	0/0.5	-	-	0/0.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0/1	-	-	-	-
Deut.	7/43.33	1/10.3	2/6.5	1/5.5	-	0/3	2/7	0/2	0/1	0/2	0/0.5	0/1	-	1/4	0/0.5	-	-
1 Samuel	0/1	-	-	-	-	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 Samuel	0/2.5	-	-	-	-	-	0/0.5	-	0/1	-	-	-	-	0/1	-	-	-
1 Kings	0/2	-	-	-	-	-	0/2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Job	2/2	-	-	-	-	-	1/1	1/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Psalms	1/76.5	1/9	0/5	0/7	0/7	0/11	0/12.5	0/3	0/2	-	0/2	-	-	0/16	-	0/2	-
Proverbs	0/6	-	-	-	-	-	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0/1	0/1	0/2	0/1
Isaiah	5.5/65.5	3/11	0/4.5	0/6	0/4	0/5	0.5/18	1/6	0/2	0/1	-	-	-	0/2	-	1/6	-
Book	# of quot.	Mt	Mk	Lk	Jn	Acts	Rom	1 Cor	2 Cor	Gal	Eph	1 Tm	2 Tm	Heb	Jam	1 Pet	2 Pet
Jeremiah	0/5	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	0/1	0/1	-	-	-	-	0/2	-	-	-
Ezekiel	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0/1.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Daniel	0/5	0/2	0/2	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hosea	1/7	1/3	-	0/1	-	-	0/2	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Joel	0/2	-	-	-	-	0/1	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Amos	0/2	-	-	-	-	0/2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jonah	0/1	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Micah	1/2	1/2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Habakkuk	0/4	-	-	-	-	0/1	0/1	-	-	0/1	-	-	-	-	0/1	-	-
Haggai	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0/1	-	-
Zechariah	2/7	1/3	0/1	-	1/2	-	-	-	-	-	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Malachi	3/4	1/1	1/1	1/1	-	-	0/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 3: Instances where the New Testament Differs in Meaning from the Septuagint

The following two tables summarize these results, providing percentage agreement for each Old Testament and New

Testament book. For instance, Zechariah is quoted 7 times, 5 of which are in agreement with the meaning of the Septuagint text. Thus, the New Testament follows the Septuagint's version of Zechariah 71.4% of the time. Similarly, Luke follows the Septuagint in 24 of 26 passages, for a percentage agreement = 92.3.

Genesis	100
Exodus	100
Leviticus	100
Numbers	100
Deuteronomy	83.8
1 Samuel	100
2 Samuel	100
1 Kings	100
Job	0
Psalms	98.7
Proverbs	100
Isaiah	91.6
Jeremiah	100
Ezekiel	100
Daniel	100
Hosea	85.7
Joel	100
Amos	100
Jonah	100
Micah	50
Habakkuk	100
Haggai	100
Zechariah	71.4
Malachi	25
Total	93.0

Table 4: Percentage Agree-ment by Old Testament Book

Other conclusions can be drawn. Considering the New Testament as comprised of the synoptic gospels, John, Acts, Paul's epistles, Hebrews, and the catholic epistles, the following agreement percentages are found:

Synoptic gospels - 86.9
John   - 92.9
Acts   - 100
Paul's epistles   - 94.2
Hebrews   - 97.3
Catholic epistles - 94.1

If we group Luke's writings, Luke and Acts, we find an agreement rate of 97%. Clearly, the gospels tend to diverge from the Septuagint most frequently, with Matthew showing the most disagreement.

Looking instead at the source books, the agreement between the New Testament and the Septuagintal versions of Job, Micah and Malachi is quite poor.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of Table 4 relates to the excellent agreement for Genesis, Exodus and Psalms, with almost 139 quotations drawn from these three books, and only one disagreement.

Overall, the agreement in sense between the New Testament and the Septuagint is 93%. This compares favorably with the rate of agreement between the New Testament quotations and the Hebrew Old Testament, 68%. An analysis of the degree of agreement between the Hebrew Old Testament and New Testament quotations - similar to that just presented for the Septuagint - may be viewed by clicking here.

Matthew	83.3
Mark	88.9
Luke	92.3
John	92.9
Acts	100
Romans	94.3
1 Cor	88.2
2 Cor	100
Galatians	100
Ephesians	100
1 Timothy	100
2 Timothy	100
Hebrews	97.3
James	100
1 Peter	91.7
2 Peter	100
Total	93.0

Table 5: Percentage Agreement by New Testament Book

The following figure compares the results presented in Table 4 with similar results comparing agreement between the New Testament and the Masoretic text. Septuagint results are presented in blue, while those for the Masoretic text are in red. Note in particular the tendency of the New Testament authors to disagree with the Masoretic version of Isaiah.
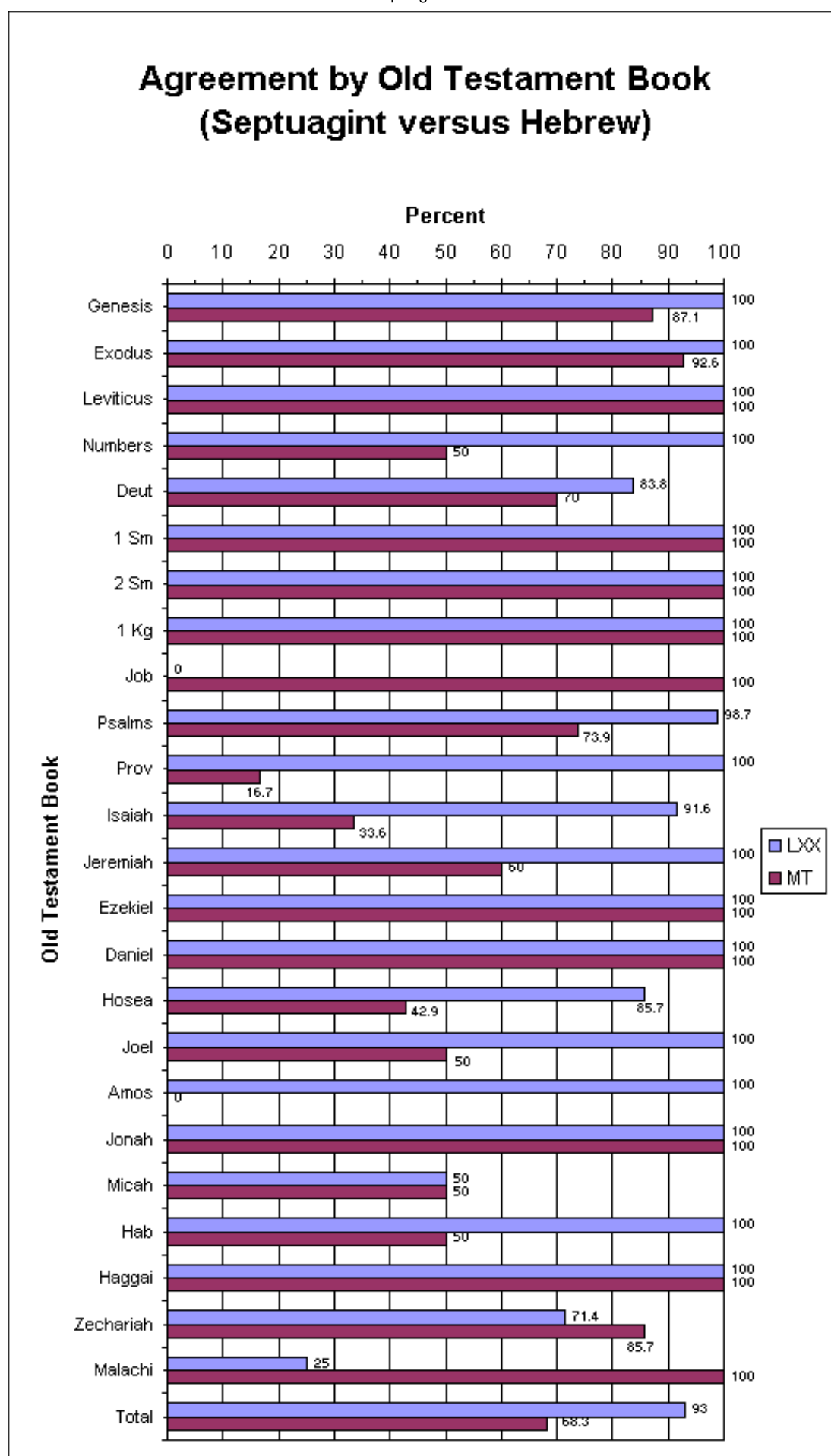
Agreement by Old Testament Book
(Septuagint versus Hebrew)

Percent

Figure 2: Agreement by Old Testament Book (Septuagint versus Hebrew)

In fact, among all the books quoted from most frequently – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Psalms and Isaiah –

the Septuagint does better than the Masoretic text.

Masoretic readings are preferred by the New Testament authors when they reference Job, Zechariah and Malachi. It is understandable, therefore, that Jerome, in his critiques of the Septuagint, emphasized passages from Hosea and Zechariah to support his contention that the New Testament authors diverged from the Septuagint whenever the Greek departed in meaning from the Hebrew. Evidently, he was embarrassed by the Septuagint - and this embarrassment blinded him to the New Testament's preference to that version. "It would be tedious now to enumerate, what great additions and omissions the Septuagint has made, and all the passages which in church-copies are marked with daggers and asterisks [symbols indicating words present in the Greek but absent in the Hebrew, and vice versa]. The Jews generally laugh when they hear our version of this passage of Isaiah, 'Blessed is he that hath seed in Zion and servants in Jerusalem [Is. 31.9].' In Amos also ... But how shall we deal with the Hebrew originals in which these passages and others like them are omitted, passages so numerous that to reproduce them would require books without number? [Letter LVII]" One wonders whether Jerome would have been able to overcome this evident social pressure against the Greek version if he had been aware of the diversity of the ancient Hebrew texts.

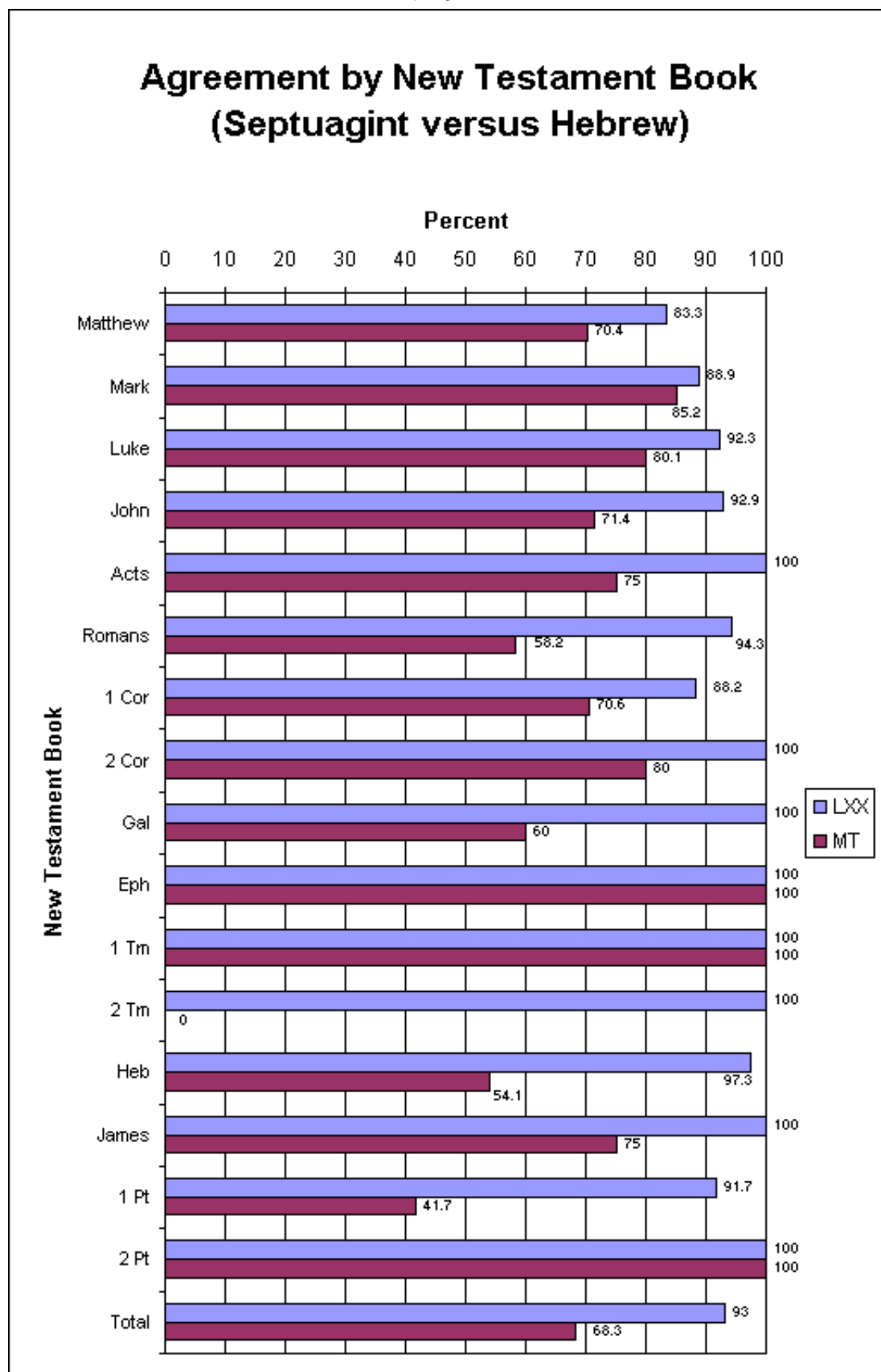Similar results are presented by New Testament book immediately below.

Agreement by New Testament Book
(Septuagint versus Hebrew)

Percent

Book	LXX	MT
Matthew	83.3	70.4
Mark	88.9	85.2
Luke	92.3	80.1
John	92.9	71.4
Acts	100	75
Romans	94.3	58.2
1 Cor	88.2	70.6
2 Cor	100	80
Gal	100	60
Eph	100	100
1 Tm	100	100
2 Tm	100	0
Heb	97.3	54.1
James	100	75
1 Pt	91.7	41.7
2 Pt	100	100
Total	93	68.3

Figure 3: Agreement by New Testament Book (Septuagint versus Hebrew)

As a rule, each New Testament author agrees with the Septuagint translators more frequently than with the Massoretes. The most striking contrasts are in John's gospel, Acts, Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, James and 1 Peter.

Although, as noted above, the disagreement with the Septuagint is most pronounced in the synoptic gospels, these diverge from the Masoretic text even more strongly than they do from the Septuagint. This is not at all what one would have expected from reading Jerome's *Lives of Illustrious Men*. "Matthew, also called Levi, apostle and aforetimes publican, composed a gospel of Christ at first published in Judea in Hebrew for the sake of those of the circumcision who believed, but this was afterwards translated into Greek though by what author is uncertain. The Hebrew itself has been

preserved until the present day in the library at Caesarea which Pamphilus so diligently gathered. I have also had the opportunity of having this volume described to me by the Nazarenes of Borea, a city of Syria, who use it. In this it is to be noted that wherever the Evangelist, whether on his own account or in the person of our Lord the Saviour quotes the testimony of the Old Testament he does not follow the authority of the translators of the Septuagint but the Hebrew." The reader can himself test the verity of this statement directly or by consulting Figure 3, which shows that even Matthew preferred the Septuagint to the Hebrew.

Presentation of New Testament Divergences from the Septuagint

For completeness, I present here a table (similar to Table 2 above) showing those instances where the New Testament follows the Hebrew sense against the Septuagint. Two of these, Malachi 3.1 (3 times) and Isaiah 8.14 (twice), are quoted by several New Testament authors. Since Romans 9.33/Isaiah 8.14 is counted as half a quotation, the New Testament follows the Hebrew against the sense of the Septuagint 8.5 times.

New/Old Testament Reference	New Testament/Masoretic Text	Septuagint
Matt 2.15/ Hosea 11.1	"Out of Egypt have I called my son."	out of Egypt have I called his children.
Matt 11.10/ Malachi 3.1	"Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee."	Behold, I send forth my messenger, and he shall survey the way before me.
John 19.37/ Zech. 12.10	"They shall look upon him whom they have pierced."	They shall look upon me, because they have mocked me.
Rom 9.33/ Isaiah 8.14	"a stumbling stone and a rock of offense"	a stumbling stone, neither against the falling of a rock
Rom 11.35/ Job 41.11	"Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid."	or who will resist me, and abide
1 Cor 3.19/ Job 5.13	"He catches the wise in their craftiness"	who takes the wise in their wisdom

Table 7: New Testament Quotations in Agreement with the Hebrew Against the Sense of the Septuagint

As with Table 2, the quotations from the New Testament in Table 7 are from the Revised Standard Version. The Septuagint column is from Brenton's translation, as it is in the following.

The following table depicts occasions where the New Testament diverges in meaning from both the Hebrew of the Massoretes and the Septuagint. Red type is used to indicate discrepancies in meaning. Green indicates the words so colored are omitted from the New Testament quotation. Certain words are underlined in Mark 12.29-30 to facilitate comparison. The translations in both the New Testament and Masoretic Text columns are from the Revised Standard Version.

New/Old Testament Reference	New Testament	Septuagint	Masoretic Text
Matt 2.6/ Micah 5.2	"And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel."	And thou, Bethleem, house of Ephratha, art few in number to be reckoned among the thousands of Juda; yet out of thee shall one come forth to me, to be a ruler of Israel	But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel

Matt 4.15-16/ Isaiah 9.1-2	"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles - the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned"	O land of Zebulun, land of Nephthalim, and the rest inhabiting the sea-coast, and the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. O people walking in darkness, behold a great light: ye that dwell in the region and shadow of death, a light shall shine upon you	the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.
Matt 8.17/ Isaiah 53.4	"He took our infirmities and bore our diseases"	He bears our sins, and is pained for us	Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows
Matt 12.18-20/ Isaiah 42.1-3	"Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom I am well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will any one hear his voice in the streets; he will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick, till he brings justice to victory; and in his name will the Gentiles hope."	Jacob is my servant, I will help him; Israel is my chosen, my soul has accepted him; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor shall his voice be heard without. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench; but he shall bring forth judgement to truth. He shall shine out, and shall not be discouraged, until he shall have set judgment on the earth: and in his name shall the Gentiles trust.	Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands will wait for his law
Matt 13.35/ Psalm 78.2	"I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world."	I will open my mouth in parables: I will utter dark sayings which have been from the beginning	I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old
Matt 22.37/ Deut 6.5	"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."	And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength	and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might
Matt 27.9-10/ Zech 11.12-13	"And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me."	And they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said to me, Drop them into the furnace, and I will see if it is good metal, as I was proved for their sakes. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them into the furnace in the house of the Lord.	And they weighed out as my wages thirty shekels of silver. Then the LORD said to me, "Cast into the treasury" - the lordly price at which I was paid off by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them into the treasury in the house of the LORD.
Mark 12.29-30/ Deut 6.4-5	"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."	Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength	Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might
Rom 10.6-8/	"Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up	It is not in heaven above, as if there were one saying, Who shall go up for us into heaven, and shall take it for us, and we will hear and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, saying, Who will go over for us to the other	It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will go

Deut 30.12-14	from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart"	side of the sea, and take it for us, and make it audible to us, and we will do it? The word is very near thee, in thy mouth, and in thine heart, and in thine hands to do it	over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?" But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it
Rom 12.19/ Deut 32.35	"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord"	In the day of vengeance I will recompense	Vengeance is mine, and recompense
1 Cor 15.54/ Isaiah 25.8	"Death is swallowed up in victory"	Death has prevailed and swallowed men up	He will swallow up death for ever

Table 8: New Testament Quotations in Disagreement with the Hebrew and the Septuagint

All together, there are 14 such instances in the New Testament (the additional 3 being duplicates of quotations presented in Table 8). The distribution is as follows: Matthew (7), Mark (2), Luke (1), Romans (2), 1 Corinthians (1) and Hebrews (1). These 14 instances, together with the 8.5 from Table 7, tally to 22.5 cases where the New Testament disagrees with the sense of the Septuagint (see Table 3 above).

Assessment of the Agreement in Wording between the New Testament and the Septuagint

In the previous section, the agreement in meaning between New and Old Testament passages was evaluated. In the following, the precision of agreement in wording will be examined. As is expected, the percentage of quotations with exact or near exact duplication in wording is lower than the percentage agreeing in sense or intention. Jerome (Letter LVII), after reviewing passages such as those in Table 8 above, remarked: "From all these passages it is clear that the apostles and evangelists in translating the old testament scriptures have sought to give the meaning rather than the words, and that they have not greatly cared to preserve forms or constructions, so long as they could make clear the subject to understanding." While it is true that these authors did not feel rigorous fidelity in quotation was a requirement, the degree to which "forms or constructions" in the Septuagint were preserved in the New Testament is remarkable.

The table of quotations in New Testament order includes a column labelled with the following letters:

P - **perfect** or near-perfect quotation from the Septuagint - only minor differences, such as word order, articles, inconsequential pronouns, *etc*.

S - perfect but some words replaced with **synonymns** (example - Romans 9.17) or with words of related meaning.

O - the New Testament **omits** portions of the Septuagint text - ellipsis (example - Mark 7.6-7).

L - poetic **license** employed by the New Testament author: a portion of the Septuagint is replaced or reconstructed (example - Hebrews 10.5-7).

A - the New Testament author **augments** the Septuagint with additional wording (example - Romans 11.9-10).

F - **fragmentary** (some words in common - replacements as frequent or more so).

E - few to no words in common (**empty** set).

Perfect (P) quotations and those simply involving an ellipsis (O) show the highest fidelity to the Septuagint, while the other end of the spectrum is represented by cases where few to no common words can be found (E) or where the same words appear, but in a fragmentary fashion (F). In between are the cases of poetic license (L) and those where liberty of a more restrained form has been taken - through the use of synonymns (S) and by the augmentation (A) of the Old Testament wording with an idea foreign to the literal sense of the text.

Examples of these last three are perhaps in order. Malachi 3.1 is an example of an "L" - the New Testament author, following the sense of the Masoretic text - replaces the idea of the messenger surveying the way of the Messiah with that of preparation. Another example of an "L" is provided by 1 Corinthians 3.20/Psalm 94.11. There, "the Lord knows the

thoughts of <u>men</u>" is altered to "the Lord knows the thoughts of <u>the wise</u>."

As an example of the New Testament authors' use of synonymns (S), consider Galatians 4.30/Genesis 21.10. The Septuagint translates as, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondswoman shall not inherit with <u>my son Isaac</u>." Paul has transformed this to read, "Cast out the handmaid and her son: for the son of the handmaid shall not inherit with <u>the son of the freewoman</u>."

Augmentation (A) is seen in, for instance, in Acts 2.17-21/Joel 2.28-32. Luke appends the words "and they shall prophesy" to the quotation "Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my Spirit."

The following table shows the distribution of quotations among the various categories (with P and O taken together) for the New Testament books. The distributions are shown in terms of percentage of quotations for each book in each category.

Book	P&O	A	S	L	F	E
Matthew	61.1	1.9	7.4	14.8	9.2	5.6
Mark	55.6	9.3	5.5	22.2	3.7	3.7
Luke	69.2	1.9	1.9	23.1	0	3.9
John	46.4	0	3.6	35.8	7.1	7.1
Acts	60	5	5	25	5	0
Romans	73.8	3.3	2.5	17.2	1.6	1.6
1 Corinthians	47	5.9	11.8	23.6	11.7	0
2 Corinthians	50	5	10	25	10	0
Galatians	80	0	20	0	0	0
Ephesians	80	0	0	20	0	0
1 Timothy	100	0	0	0	0	0
2 Timothy	50	0	50	0	0	0
Hebrews	71.6	9.5	8.1	8.1	2.7	0
James	75	0	25	0	0	0
1 Peter	58.3	0	25	16.7	0	0
2 Peter	0	0	0	0	100	0
Total	**63.9**	**4.1**	**7.0**	**18.1**	**4.7**	**2.2**

Table 9 - Categorization of the Fidelity of New Testament Quotations of the Septuagint

Several conclusions can be drawn. First, the majority of New Testament quotations are taken from the Septuagint without change or with relatively minor changes - 64 percent. Second, the New Testament authors felt no qualms about modifying the Old Testament passages to support their message - A, S, and L-type quotations amounting to about 29 percent. Third, roughly 7 percent of quotations (22 altogether) are fragmentary or unrecognizable as quotations. Of these, only 12 are introduced by a formula of quotation, such as "it is written." Thus, only 12 quotations - unambiguously identified as quotations - depart radically from the wording of the Septuagint.

Further Evidence of the Influence of the Septuagint

Why does Stephen say that seventy-five entered into Egypt when Joseph sent for them (Acts 7.14), when the Masoretic

text clearly reports there were seventy in all? "All the persons of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were seventy" - Genesis 46.27. It appears, however, that Stephen was not in error. He was simply backing the Septuagint account: "all the souls of the house of Jacob who came with Joseph into Egypt were seventy-five souls." (Incidentally, this Septuagint reading of seventy-five is also found in one of the scrolls from Qumran.)

The Hebrew backs this reading of Genesis 10.24: "And Arphaxad begat Salah." The Septuagint has, "And Arphaxad begat Cainan, and Cainan begat Sala." Similarly, the Hebrew in Genesis 11.12-13 is translated as: "And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah; And Arphaxad lived after he had begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters. And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber." But the Septuagint has, "And Arphaxad lived a hundred and thirty-five years, and begot Cainan. And Arphaxad lived after he had begotten Cainan, four hundred years, and begot sons and daughters, and died. And Cainan lived a hundred and thirty years and begot Sala; and Cainan lived after he had begotten Sala, three hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters, and died." The apostle Luke apparently had the Septuagint account in mind when he listed the ancestry of the Christ. He wrote, "which was the son of Sala, which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad." (Luke 3.35-36).

Paul leaves a clue in Galatians 3.16-17: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, which was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Does the Hebrew support a span of 430 years from the giving of the promises to Abraham and the giving of the Law? Apparently not, for the evangelical apologist Gleason Archer in his *Bible Difficulties* asserts that 645 years passed between those two events. Archer's conclusion is that the time interval in mind is between a subsequent confirmation of the promises (to Jacob in Genesis 46.2-4) and the production of the tablets on Sinai. This, however, seems a clever dodge. Paul says clearly that the time between God's making the promises to Abraham and the giving of the law was 430 years. Where did he get such an idea - if a careful examination of the chronology supports a number closer to 645 years? The likely explanation is that that Paul was reading the Septuagint's Exodus 12.40: "And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt <u>and the land of Chanaan</u>, was four hundred and thirty years."

That Paul relied upon the Septuagint is made strikingly clear from Romans 3.12-18. This entire passage is contained in one psalm in the Septuagint. The following table shows Romans 3.12-18 in the ASV, Brenton's English translation of Psalm 14.3, and the Greek for both New Testament and Septuagint passages.

NT English (ASV)	Septuagint English (Brenton)	NT Greek	Septuagint Greek
They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; There is none that doeth good, no, not, so much as one: Their throat is an open sepulchre; With their tongues they have used deceit: The poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace	They are all gone out of the way, they are together become good for nothing, there is none that does good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.	παντες εξεκλιναν αμα ηχρειωθησαν, ουκ εστιν ο ποιων χρηστοτητα, ουκ εστιν εως ενος: ταφος ανεωγμενος ο λαρυγξ αυτων, ταις γλωσσαις αυτων εδολιουσαν, ιος ασπιδων υπο τα χειλη αυτων: ων το στομα αρας και πικριας γεμει, οξεις οι ποδες αυτων εκχεαι αιμα: συντριμμα και ταλαιπωρια εν ταις οδοις αυτων, και οδον ειρηνης ουκ	παντες εξεκλιναν, αμα ηχρειωθησαν, ουκ εστι ποιων χρηστοτητα, ουκ εστιν εως ενος: ταφος ανεωγμενος ο λαρυγξ αυτων, ταις γλωσσαις αυτων εδολιουσαν, ιος ασπιδων υπο τα χειλη αυτων: ων το στομα αρας και πικριας γεμει, οξεις οι ποδες αυτων εκχεαι αιμα: συντριμμα και ταλαιπωρια εν ταις οδοις αυτων, και οδον ειρηνης

have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.		εγνωσαν: ουκ εστιν φοβος θεου απεναντι των οφθαλμων αυτων	ουκ εγνωσαν: ουκ εστι φοβος θεου απεναντι των οφθαλμων αυτων

Table 10: Romans 3.12-18 in the New Testament and Psalm 14.3 in the Septuagint

The Hebrew for Psalm 14.3 ends with "no, not so much as one," so Paul cannot have obtained the entire quotation from this Psalm alone if he were reading from the Hebrew. In fact, if Paul were relying upon the Hebrew, he had to string together phrases from six separate locations in this passage: Psalm 14.1-3 (or 53.1-3), 5.9, 140.3, 10.7, Isaiah 59.7-9, and Psalm 36.1. It would be a remarkable coincidence if Paul - using the Hebrew alone - were to collect *just* these fragments in *just* the same order as they appear in the Septuagint. (Another explanation is that the Septuagint's rendering of Psalm 14.3 is a later modification by Christians, a falsification of the original Septuagint reading to bring it into agreement with Romans. However, if that were the case, one wonders why a more exact representation of Romans 3.10 and 11 is not presented in the Septuagint's Psalm 14.1-2, leading into the quotation in Table 9 above.) Quite plainly, the most plausible explanation is that, in Romans 3.12-18, Paul was quoting Psalm 14.3 from the Septuagint.

The statement in Hebrews 11.5 that before Enoch's translation "he had this testimony, that he pleased God" appears to depend on the Septuagint wording of Genesis 5.22 and 24. In the Masoretic text, Enoch is said not to have pleased, but to have walked with, God.

There are also many allusions in the New Testament to the Septuagint. For instance, in Revelation 1.4, John sends greetings to the seven churches in Asia from "he who is." In English, the reference may not be obvious. But, in the Greek, John uses the phrase ο ων, the exact words God spoke from the burning bush in Exodus 3.14 (Septuagint) after Moses asked His name. As a second example, the author of the book of Hebrews seems to have had Wisdom 7.26 in mind when writing Hebrews 1.3.

Conclusions

The New Testament is a witness to the Church's use of the Septuagint as sacred scripture in its earliest days. This use continued throughout the Church until early in the fourth century, when Jerome undertook a translation from the Hebrew of his day. We have seen in the section on the Septuagint in the Fathers that Jerome agreed with the proposition that the Church's Old Testament should be the same one quoted in the New Testament. But he held the view - which we have shown above to be manifestly incorrect - that the New Testament authors were faithful to the Hebrew Old Testament.

Is the example of New Testament usage sufficient grounds for a return to the Septuagint as the basis for Old Testament translation? Are there good reasons for translating from the Hebrew Masoretic text, as is the almost universal pattern in the Western world? It might be argued that the Hebrew of the Massoretes is truer to the original that the Septuagint, but this is doubtful given the existence of variant readings in the Hebrew before the second century A.D. The current Hebrew text is indeed the one selected by the rabbis at the end of the first century, which became the standard Hebrew Old Testament thereafter. However, legislation by a body outside the boundaries of the Church can hardly be binding on Her. It could be argued that, even though there were variant readings in the Hebrew at earlier times, we can often be fairly certain that the Hebrew of the Massoretes and the Hebrew the Septuagint was based on are identical. In those cases, we should translate from the Hebrew, and by doing so bring the sense into English with greater exactness. In response, this seems more of an argument for using the Hebrew as a translation aid than as the basis for translation. Such usage would doubtless be laudable. However, this approach should be undertaken with caution. As the meaning of words changes with time, the Septuagint Greek may often provide insight into the meaning of the Hebrew at the time of translation, and so should not be freely replaced with an academic conjecture.

Jerome mentioned with embarrassment certain passages in the Septuagint which he believed to be incorrectly translated from the Hebrew. But before we can convict the Septuagint of translation error, we have to produce, at a minimum, the Hebrew text upon which the Septuagint is based. Since that text no longer exists, accusations of mistranslation remain unproven conjectures. And even if the Septuagint is thick with mistranslation, its errors are frequently sanctioned by the New Testament. For instance, if the word "virgin (*parthenos* in Greek)" in Isaiah 7.14 is a mistranslation of the Hebrew word *almah*, Matthew has given his assent to this error. In fact, those of us who believe the New Testament to be inspired by God are required to believe that many "errors" of the Septuagint are inspired also, because they are incorporated into the New Testament directly. If the errors that are quoted have Divine sanction, on what basis can we reject the errors that are not quoted? Or, consider what we imply if we say that the Masoretic text *alone* can lay claim to being the genuine Old Testament. The clear implication is that the authors of the New Testament were benighted and,

ignorant of the truth, used an inferior text. The theological implications they drew when they quoted from "mistranslations" in the Septuagint should be rejected. Thus, the logical corollaries to the proposition that the Masoretic text *alone* is worthy to be considered the Old Testament include: Christ was not born of a virgin, the angels do not worship the Son, Christ did not come to restore sight to the blind, the behavior of the Jews was not cause for God's name to be blasphemed among the Gentiles, etc. In short, we are forced to conclude that the New Testament is not inspired.

I have yet to discover any sufficient reason to consider the Masoretic text as preferable to the Septuagint. However, the case in favor of the Septuagint is subject to criticism. Even assuming that the New Testament warrant is sufficient grounds for using a text, one could argue that the New Testament witness is muddled. Although we do find the apostles and their followers using the Septuagint as we know it with great frequency, they also stray toward other sources - sometimes to a text very similar to the Masoretic, sometimes to a text we do not currently possess. Though our failure to recognize the basis for the quotation may often be due to paraphrase, there are cases that are very difficult to explain in this way. Jerome mentioned two of them in a passage quoted in the section on the fathers: "For he shall be called a Nazarene" (Matthew 2. 23) is one example. Another is, "Rivers of living water shall flow out of his belly" (John 7.38).

It is possible that every quotation in the New Testament is from a Septuagint, but from one, though popular in the first century, we no longer possess in its entirety. It is reasonable to conclude from the writings of Irenaeus and Justin Martyr that their scriptures were slightly different from our own. When the New Testament strays from the Masoretic Text, these fathers do too, at least where common quotations can be examined. But there are also portions of scripture quoted in the fathers that are not available in our version of the Greek text. For instance, in his *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin claimed that the Jews had deleted the verse, "The Lord remembered His dead people of Israel who lay in the graves; and He descended to preach to them His own salvation." Irenaeus also quoted the same verse, though he attributed it to Jeremiah on one occasion and to Isaiah on the other. Justin also claimed that the Jews had removed the words "from the wood" from the verse in Psalm 96: "Tell ye among the nations, the Lord hath reigned from the wood." Neither of these is in the Septuagint we possess today. As a third example, Justin quoted the following, possibly from Ezra or Nehemiah: "And Esdras said to the people, This passover is our Savior and our refuge. And if you have understood, and your heart has taken it in, and we shall humble Him on a standard, and thereafter hope in Him, then this place shall not be forsaken for ever, says the God of hosts. But if you will not believe Him, and will not listen to His declaration, you will be a laughingstock to the nations."

In short, neither the Greek nor the Hebrew Old Testament is perfect. The decision to abandon the Septuagint in favor of the Hebrew was made on the mistaken belief that the New Testament quotes exclusively from the Hebrew Old Testament. A more modern argument in favor of the Hebrew might stress the near-perfect preservation of that text through the centuries - a contention proven false by the variant readings discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls - or it might emphasize the mistranslations in the only other real contender, the Septuagint - which implies the rejection of the authority of the New Testament. The argument in favor of returning to the Septuagint notes the general (though not universal) reliance on it by the New Testament authors and their followers in the early Church. The New Testament can be more fully understood and appreciated, it is argued, if read in conjunction with the Septuagint, because the language of the Greek Old Testament is present throughout the New, both in overt quotations and allusions. The theology of the Church, as explained by the Fathers of the first several centuries, rests on the wording of the Septuagint. If this theology is true and worthy of defense, then it is critical that the Church be thoroughly familiar with the Bible of Her founders and early defenders.

It seems clear to me that the case in favor of the Septuagint is the stronger of the two. But the same primary argument in favor of translation from the Septuagint - New Testament precedent - implies that the Christian should be aware of Masoretic readings. In like manner, our desire to understand the theology of the early Church in the light of Her scriptures entails the need to retain familiarity with those scriptures - such as the ones quoted by Justin Martyr above - which appear to have dropped out of the Old Testament over the years. In my view, then, the ideal Old Testament will be based on the Septuagint as the primary source, and will include extensive footnotes including significant variant readings from all other sources, including the Masoretic text, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Fathers of the Church.

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