

Complementary Difference: Why New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source¹

Introduction

On Jesus' authority (Divinely inspired) "Scripture cannot be broken" (Jn. 10:35). Yet this perspective may seem difficult to reconcile with New Testament (NT) 'quotations'² of the Old Testament (OT) which differ from the OT as we have it, based on the Hebrew Masoretic text (MT). For example, some may feel that a quotation has to be a verbatim (word-for-word) repetition of something previously expressed. On this view, any variation in quotation fractures expectations about how inspired Scripture should behave. However, not only is this to impose a strict view of 'quotation' onto the Bible, but can misdirect unedifyingly into criticism of the text of the Hebrew Bible, as per MT. Neither reaction (the verbatim, or finding fault with the text of the OT/MT), as I hope to show, is consistent with the nature of Scripture.

I cite Robert Roberts on the issue of inspiration and textual variance between the ("Synoptic") Gospels. His is a rare Christadelphian approach to *difference* which I relate to NT quotations.

Quotational types themselves vary. Some, indeed, are in word-for-word correspondence, but the majority of NT quotations do not exactly match the OT, or the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT)³ upon which English OT versions are generally based. A well-known example of quotational change is Heb. 10:5 from Psa. 40:6:

¹ **Readers note:** this essay, written in Mid-1990s, is published in *Christadelphian Ejournal of Biblical Interpretation* in 2011 (Vol. 5. No. 1) with little revision (just a few tweaks, plus this and footnote 16), in response both to enquiry and to visit issues of inspiration and the Biblical text. Although this essay is a preliminary statement, a basis for further research and refinement, the author still holds to the principles, argument and conclusions presented. A revision would *include* bringing some of the material found in the footnotes, or further material of the same (more technical) sort, into the main text.

The original version of this essay was published by the UK magazine, *The New Bible Student* (ca 1997); this magazine took over the mantle of publishing more advanced Bible Studies in the UK in the 1990s. The essay was also privately circulated, in booklet form. The original publication included an appendix listing instances of Old Testament passages reproduced two or more times in the New Testament. Since these are the subject of my current research I have not included them here. A related paper of mine is available at: <http://www.christadelphian-ejbi.org/extracts/Body.pdf>. (Cf. n. 4, below.)

² I use 'quotation' since this is a familiar term. For the purpose of this present article, I define 'quotation' as an earlier fragment of Scripture identified, whether introduced or not, in a later reuse. This can be applied to the OT quoting itself, the NT quoting itself or to OT material reproduced in the NT, which is the concern of this article, looking especially at those which undergo change, e.g., grammatical or semantic.

³ The standard view is that where the NT and the Septuagint (LXX), or Old Greek, agree against the Hebrew Bible this is seen as evidence that the NT is quoting from the (*sic*) LXX. Before the impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 20th century, from the mid-19th century scholars practically preferred the LXX over MT. Cases of NT quotations agreeing with LXX against MT, and particularly the greater antiquity of the LXX (e.g., 4th century Vaticanus 1209) compared with the MT (1008/1009 A.D. Leningrad codex), assisted this preferential view. With the NT and LXX both being in Greek, the NT interfacing with LXX

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

(KJV) NT Heb 10:5 ... A body hast thou prepared me.⁴

(KJV) OT Psa 40:6 ...mine ears hast thou opened (or 'prepared').

When confronted by changes in the language of a NT quotation from the OT, various responses result or resolutions are attempted. Sometimes a strict view of what a quotation should be, e.g., a necessarily verbatim or closely corresponding reproduction, lends weight to positing a faulty MT, favouring conjectural emendation of its text or a quest for alternative OT sources. The alternative sources proposed might be OT Greek translations in the Septuagint (LXX)

tradition, fragmentary Hebrew manuscripts from the Judean Desert (some of which occasionally agree with LXX), or hypothesizing about possible temple (and synagogue) scrolls different from MT. E. Würthwein, within a qualified scholarly overview of MT, states⁵:

The earlier tendency to undervalue [the MT] in favor of the Greek [LXX] version or even of modern conjectures has now been almost entirely abandoned, because [MT] has repeatedly been demonstrated to be the best witness to the text. Any deviation from it requires justification.⁶

(as a representative of the OT) is readily assumed; or some suppose the LXX was itself Holy Scripture for writers of the NT. (LXX is the OT of the Eastern Orthodox Church.)

The implications of this article question the need for any NT dependence on LXX, especially in regard to quotations. This article is a work in progress. However, even to the extent I argue herein, if it is the NT that makes the textual changes to the OT being quoted, then the Septuagint is not the source of such change. A neglected take-up in research is the extent to which Christian scribal editing has conformed LXX to NT quotations, e.g., perhaps during recensional work after 3rd century A.D. From the Scriptural viewpoint, God is involved in a 'fellowship of revelation' with His mediating agents, by whom the spirit-word of God is inscribed ('original autographs'). Therefore, there is no proof that Jesus, or the *spirit-guided* NT writers, would (need to) have used, or deemed "unbreakable" scripture (Jn. 10:35), an *uninspired* heterogeneous Greek OT translation. ("The Seventy", according to legend or tradition, translated only the Torah, or Pentateuch, ca 250 B.C. Other OT books, plus the Apocrypha, were added over subsequent centuries.)

⁴ See n. 1, above. In <http://www.christadelphian-ejbi.org/extracts/Body.pdf>, I argued that Biblical textual perspectives suggest that Heb. 10:5's 'body' has slipped into the LXX now extant. What is called 'the LXX' in which 'body' is found is not an original manuscript of the pre-Christian era, but a fourth century Christian codex (e.g. Vaticanus 1209). As Septuagintalists affirm, "there is really no such thing as 'the' Septuagint" (e.g., Jobs and Silva. 2000. Also see their Second Edition, Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic: 2015, 14-17). What came to be called 'the Septuagint' in the Second Century A.D. was a compilation of Greek translations of the Hebrew Text produced over several hundred years. Editorial re-workings must be factored into its present form, including Christian insertions derived from the NT (cf. Jobs and Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* [Paternoster Press, 2000]: 195-198).

⁵ E. Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: Introduction to Biblia Hebraica* (Second edition. Wm B. Eerdmans; Grand Rapid: Michigan, 1995) 116.

⁶ (i) Particularly, once upon a time, there was an established scholarly textual industry using the heterogeneous LXX or its internally variable representatives to emend MT, supposing also that this led back to original '*ur-text*' or a proto-MT Hebrew text-type. However, attempted reconstructions of a Hebrew textual form ('retroverted') on the basis of the LXX, or other (e.g., Qumran) sources, inevitably remain speculative. Only if the LXX were a consistent translational witness, or more Hebrew MSS with variant (e.g., LXX aligning) readings existed, would it be less secure to regard MT as a faithful descendant of the "'OT'" or Hebrew scriptures (that is with some parts Aramaic) originally revealed.

(ii) S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (OUP, 1968) 320-321, in a section entitled: "The Hebrew Text and the Septuagint," discusses the earlier practice of scholars to criticise and emend MT on the basis of the LXX, and mentions a different approach now. This, of course, tells us much about the revisable nature of scholarly theory. He states: "To what extent may the LXX be legitimately used to reconstruct the Hebrew? In the first place it should be observed that there is a growing caution on the part

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

However, at least English OT versions follow the Hebrew text's form (as per MT) and thus any textual differences in a NT quotation are evident for comparison!

The argument stated

In this article I argue that the NT alone is responsible for changing the form of the OT it re-uses, so there is no point in challenging the textual integrity of MT,⁷ or seeking alternative sources which may correspond word-for-word with 'variant' NT quotations. The NT's modified re-use of a fragment of the OT will complement the earlier usage, bringing to the surface an underlying (Divinely foreknown) presupposition, or an associated aspect of meaning. Whilst I present 'complementary difference' as a phenomenon applicable to quotations, I also take it to be characteristic of Scripture as a whole. We are into issues of authorial intention or handling (manifested) in the Biblical text's mode of presentation. Hence, if such variations stand, then any theory that endeavours to eliminate them (e.g., opposing such *difference* in principle) is to be rejected; this would only divide Scripture against itself.

From the perspective of this article and with Jesus, it must be the beginning of wisdom to acknowledge that the text of scripture cannot be broken and to regard such (e.g., quotational or Synoptic Gospel) differences as a counter-intuitive hallmark of (what it is to be) Divine revelation:

[God] refuses to be understood merely from within the conceptual framework of our natural thought and language but demands of that framework a logical reconstruction in accordance with His Word."⁸

The basis of the argument

My thesis, then, is that concerning variations in quotations (as with the differences between the Gospels), a plurality of minds (Divinely inspired agents) under the control of one mind (God's) and for His purposes exclusively, express such variations consistent

of commentators in having recourse to emendation at all. This is due to an increased respect for the Masoretic text, which had been commonly accepted, with the general support of Aquila, Origen, and the Vulgate, as going back to the time of Rabbi Akiba, *ca.* A.D. 100. The evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls has not only substantially confirmed this hypothesis, but is widely held to establish the existence of this text antedating in essentials the Christian era...Formerly when the intrinsic trustworthiness of Masoretic text was held in lesser esteem, it was the practice of commentators copiously to emend their text on 'the authority of the Septuagint' as preserving an earlier and more reliable reading...translation involves interpretation, and this may in some cases suggest *prima facie* a different Hebrew text, a supposition which further investigation fails to support." See also: A. R. Millard, 'In Praise of Ancient Scribes,' *The Biblical Archaeologist* 45 (1982) 143–54.

⁷ Of course, Providential preservation of the Hebrew Bible's consonantal text from the time of Ezra appears to be the case. Likewise, Divine care also applies to the Greek NT witnessed in thousands of MSS from close to the time of the apostles. History is regulated by God's concerns. Ironically, among the Jews and institutionalised Christians, both of whom are indicted by the Scriptures, there were those whose veneration (*etc.*) for the Biblical text ensured its preservation.

⁸ T. F. Torrance, *Theological Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) 280.

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

with truth.⁹ Attempts to smooth out differences create a clash of authority over the Biblical text, ultimately treating Holy Scripture as if it is, or can be, broken.

The evidence: 'parallel quotations'

That NT quotational variation (a phenomenon which has its precedent in the OT) is a complementary feature of the Biblical text is demonstrated by the case of around forty NT 'parallel quotations' (some of which will be discussed below). A 'parallel quotation' is where the NT makes repeated use, twice or more, of the same fragment of the OT. It may exhibit the same characteristics (verbatim wording, or free variation) found in the non-parallel variety.

However, what is of interest here is a single OT quotation can be differently worded, or treated, within its several NT presentations. This is evidence for showing the NT producing quotational variation; the NT is responsible for the alterations to the repeated OT passage cited. Therefore, since the NT does this for parallel quotations within the NT, it is quite consistent to accept that it does so for non-parallel quotations (e.g. Heb 10:5, cf. Psa 40:6, above).

Parallel quotations support the view that variation in quotation should be accepted as the way Divine revelation works. Such a view can be related to Gospel parallels. Having more than one Gospel and with variations between the Gospels' accounts of the same moment, *can* be construed (e.g., not as a "Synoptic problem" but) as a mode of presentation with complementary facets of that circumstance. Sometimes they may seem difficult to understand, or to piece together, nevertheless, their different elements combine to expound the moment, or to complete (God's view of) the picture.

A parallel Gospel account is itself like 'quotation' of what took place; its variations are informative.¹⁰

Gospel parallels and their application to quotations

The differences often found in NT quotations from the OT, are comparable with the nature, or range, of differences which exist in the Gospel accounts of the life of Christ. *Nazareth Revisited* is Robert Roberts' portrayal of "Christ's wonderful life in biographical form."¹¹ In his Preface, Robert Roberts confronts the fact of variations of reportage in the

⁹ Cf. R. Roberts, *Nazareth Revisited* ("The Dawn" Book Supply. 1953. Re-print of the original published in 1890): Preface p. vii.

¹⁰ A Gospel parallel account is like 'quotation,' it is a representative portion, a Divinely focused treatment of what Jesus both did and taught (Jn. 20:30-31). Like quotations from the OT, the Greek NT will involve translation into Greek of what was undertaken largely in Hebrew in Jesus' ministry. Although Greek is the mono-lingual form for the NT text, translation from Hebrew (vernacular) is at least evident where the Greek text says of a transliterated Hebrew term "which being interpreted is" (Matt 1:23; Jn 1:41). To preclude this possibility would be to suppose that Jesus and the Apostles only spoke Greek. The Holy Spirit gifts (Acts 2:4-11) would enable what was brought to remembrance to be expressed directly in Greek, though what was remembered would have occurred in the Hebrew language, or milieu. This is quite different from the assumption sometimes made that the original Gospels were written in Hebrew (or even Aramaic), and not in Greek as we have them.

¹¹ R. Roberts, *Nazareth Revisited* ("The Dawn" Book Supply. 1953. Re-print of the original published in 1890): Preface, iii.

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

Gospels, whilst observing that "there is no profession of a verbatim report."¹² His words are a useful prelude to this present discussion:

...the Spirit's union with the apostles in the authorship...imparted a liberty of variation not permissible to a merely human reporter. The Spirit was the author of all the sayings and doings recorded, and could therefore paraphrase or vary the descriptions of His own acts or utterances, with the liberty that any author exercises in reference to his own productions. It is the failure to recognise the all-prevailing presence of the Spirit of God in the production of these writings that creates the difficulties of criticism. Rules applicable to merely human

productions are applied to a class of composition which is outside the ordinary literary category altogether. There is no parallel between a human writer who puts down his own thoughts and impressions merely, and one whose mentality is fused for the time being with a guiding mind outside his own, whose servant he is, and under whose influence he may even write things he does not understand.¹³

Robert Roberts' main thrust is illustrative of an understanding of "verbal inspiration" which lies behind the Christadelphian Statement of Faith.¹⁴ In this particular matter he contrasts the limitations of human literary composition with Divine revelation.

What should count as truth in inspired texts is not determined by narrative expectations based on human creativity, or fallible reportage. "Difficulty only arises when a false assumption is introduced as to what an inspired account ought to be."¹⁵ Thus said, he adds:

It is impossible to impute [the apostolic writings] to error if we allow the participation of the Spirit of God in the work...There are variations in the apostolic narratives, but variation is not error. Four men necessarily relate the same matter in different ways...Mental operation is too subtle a thing to be held in stereotyped grooves...their diversities are held in strict subordination to truth.¹⁶ Their narrative was controlled by the Spirit. The Spirit knowing all

¹² *Ibid.*, vii.

¹³ *Ibid.*, viii -ix.

¹⁴ Cf. Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith: "THE FOUNDATION -- That the book currently known as the Bible, consisting of the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, is the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes at present extant or available in the earth, and that the same were wholly given by inspiration of God in the writers, and are consequently without error in all parts of them, except such as may be due to errors of transcription or translation. (This paragraph was added in 1886.)" Under Doctrines to be Rejected: "We reject the doctrine - that the Bible is only partly the work of inspiration-or if wholly so, contains errors which inspiration has allowed. 2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:13; Heb. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 14:37; Neh. 9:30; John 10:35."

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vii.

¹⁶ **Note added in 2010:** Robert Roberts' statement, "Four men necessarily relate the same matter in different ways...Mental operation is too subtle a thing to be held in stereotyped grooves", requires re-presenting as it appears to involve a conflict with his overall perspective as in the previous extract, and other parts of this one. With respect to Divine revelation, "diversity" or *difference* is *of heaven* not of men. "Their diversities", if that means what they differently record, are not **their** diversities. 'Their' is merely our (or a) way of referring to the Gospel carrying their name, but it is not 'theirs', nor 'of them', but 'of

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

meanings can secure the exact meaning in a diversity of forms...Hence, the variations are not inconsistent with the Spirit's guidance.¹⁷

We rarely relate this kind of phenomenon (textual variation) found in the Synoptic Gospels to Scripture as a whole or to quotations in particular. Yet, the implications of *difference* within a single Testament are similar to those which transpire when the New reuses the Old; as I hope to show in the analysis from the Gospels offered below.

The nature and range of variations in the Gospel parallels

Typically, Gospel narrative parallels, like quotations (parallel, or otherwise), will differ in the addition, omission, changes to the word-order and grammar, of the linguistic material. In the parallel passages shown below (Mtt. 12:46-50; Mk. 3:31-35 & Lk. 8:19-21), such differences are readily apparent.

<u>Matthew 12:46-50</u>	<u>Mark 3:31-35</u>	<u>Luke 8:19-21</u>
While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother."	And his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside they sent to him and called him. And a crowd was sitting about him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, asking for you." And he replied, Who are my mother and my brothers? And looking around on those who sat about him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother."	Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him for the crowd. And he was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you." But he said to them "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

To appreciate the scale, or kind, of variations present (above), and to relate them to quotations, I list the following selection.

[1] Omission: (a) Material found in one Gospel which is missing from the other records:

- (i) "while he was still speaking to the people" occurs in Matthew, but not in Mark or in Luke;
- (ii) "And stretching out his hand towards his disciples" occurs in Matthew,

God' (1 Thess 2:13). As Roberts adds "Their narrative was controlled by the Spirit". Diversity in revelation, or God's manifestation in different believing agents, mediates His one (authorial) spirit. Like the prophets in whom was 'the spirit of Christ', or like David himself (cf. Mk 12:36 with Lk 20:42), a Messianic type, the apostles also 'speak' (in their writing) being "moved" concerning Christ "by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet 1:21; 3:2). Christ said that the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, would both "teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance" (Jn 14:26; Acts 11:16). Though eyewitnesses ("chosen before of God" Acts 10:41), who could give a personal account (Lk 1:2; 1 Cor 15:5-8; 2 Pet 1:16; 2 Pet 1:20), citing Roberts this would be "in strict subordination to [the needs of] truth."

¹⁷ R. Roberts, *Nazareth Revisited* ("The Dawn" Book Supply. 1953. Re-print of the original published in 1890): Preface, vi.

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

- but not in Mark or Luke. (The nearest gesture to this is in Mark only: "And looking around on those that sat about him.")
- (iii) "a crowd was sitting about him" occurs in Mark, but not in Matthew or Luke.

(b) Particular material found in two Gospels, Matthew and Mark, but missing from Luke:

- (i) "Here are my mother and my brothers!"
- (ii) 'The will of.'
- (iii) 'Sister' (Luke just has: "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.")

[2] Amplifying (or adding to) the sense: 'Doing' God's will, or His word (as Luke puts), is basic to all three Gospels. Yet, whatever Jesus actually remarked, three different (in two cases extended) modes of presenting God, attend the delivery of this precept. Mark simply uses the term 'God' to refer to Him by, whereas Matthew associates Him with Jesus and with heaven, and Luke identifies Him by His word:

<u>Mtt. 12:50</u>	For whoever does the will of <u>my Father in heaven</u> is my brother, and sister, and mother.
<u>Mk. 3:35</u>	Whoever does the will of <u>God</u> is my brother, and sister, and mother.
<u>Lk. 8:21</u>	My mother and my brothers are those who hear <u>the word of God</u> and do it.

[3] Difference of word order:

<u>Lk. 8:21</u>	"My mother and my brothers" appears at the start of the last statement only in this Gospel.
-----------------	---

[4] Grammatical change:

In Matthew and Mark, the last sentence has 'brother' singular, whereas Luke has 'brothers', plural.

Finally, this following example can also be borne in mind. There is a switch of focus, or reference, to cover various individuals involved with Jesus. Matthew has Jesus replying to "the man" (a single subject), as if he alone had informed Jesus of the arrival of his relations, whereas in Mark Jesus' response follows mention of the "crowd" who had told him of this presence outside. Luke also has Jesus responding to "them" (a plural subject).

A conclusion

From the foregoing, it should have become clear that differences between the Gospels do not imply: (i) faulty NT manuscripts, (ii) the need for textual reconstruction,¹⁸ (iii) a quest for (or speculation about sources or) an absent 'original,'¹⁹ or (iv)

¹⁸ That is not to say that the often marginally disputable textual details (as found in the critical apparatus of eclectic editions) do not sometimes require scrutiny or resolution.

¹⁹ See n. 25, below.

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

misrepresentation of the source of the account (what took place, etc.). We are not left to determine which Gospel account is true; each is complementary and satisfies God's truth conditions. Therefore, this 'variational' mode of representation is to be understood as a consistent convention of Divine revelation.

NT parallel quotations taken from the OT

A particular fragment of the OT may occur many times, distributed over the NT writings. For example, that Psalm 110:1 is a significant OT passage is evident from the numerous citations and allusions to it in the NT, around twenty times, easily exceeding the reproduction of any other OT source. The phrase 'after the order of Melchizedek,' taken from Psalm 110:4, is repeated six times in Heb. 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11, 17, 21, but just once, in 7:15, it is found as 'after the *similitude* of Melchizedek.'

This variation has occurred within the narrow context of part of one Epistle. Since both the terms 'order' and 'similitude' are presented within a common framework of 'after the [] of Melchizedek,' this is a strong case for 'complementary difference.' The concepts associated with 'order' and 'similitude' both depict integral features of Christ's priesthood. Significantly, not only do these terms differ from each other in the NT context, but neither word corresponds literally to the Hebrew idiom based on the core semantics of 'word' (Hebrew: *dbr*) in the Psalm itself.²⁰ (Cf. "word of the oath" in Heb 7:28, based on 'said' Psa 110:1, 'sworn' v. 4, and the association of 'word' re Melchizedek.) This adds yet another layer of difference, as I have shown elsewhere.²¹

Quotations themselves, verbatim or variational, whether parallel or not, are readily recognised where they are introduced in some way, like: "it is written," or "David himself saith", or "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet." But, not all reuse of OT language is identifiably prefaced in this way.

Parallel quotations of a piece of the OT are easily identified, however much they vary, by their oft repetition. Sometimes, one, or more, of the parallel citations of an OT passage may be marked by an introductory phrase, thus combining repetition with introduction. As already mentioned, around forty OT passages are reproduced several times in the NT; some more than twice. Findings from the analysis of what happens in Gospel parallels can now be applied to such parallel quotations. In what follows, I shall be looking at typical examples of parallel usage of the OT in the NT; the two given are associated with the Law.

[A] "Written in your law"²²

Matthew 18:16 & 2 Corinthians 13:1 cf. Deuteronomy 19:15.

OT source cited in the NT (modified to match the Hebrew sense and word order):

²⁰ In fact, Aquila and Symmachus both have *κατὰ λόγον*/'according to the word of Melchizedek'. Origen/LXX presumably follow oft repeat of NT's *κατὰ τὴν τάξιν*/'according to the order of Melchizedek'.

²¹ See J.W. Adey, "The Similitude of the Word," in *The Testimony* (March-May 1980). Presumably, English versions have adopted 'order' in Psa.110:4, influenced by its frequent repetition in Hebrews.

²² A similar expression "Is it not written in your law...?" occurs in Jn. 10:34, where 'your law' is applied to words derived from a Psalm (82:6) and not Sinai. What are we to make of this? It seems to violate our accepted categories! Surely, like quotational adjustments of OT words in the NT, we are being informed about how to 'read' Scripture. It may be that Jesus had in mind a precedent in the Law which the Psalm is citing. Alternatively, he may be offering us a new way of looking at the function of the Psalms.

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

Deut. 19:15: Upon the mouth of two witnesses, or upon the mouth of three witnesses, shall stand (up) *the* word.

Here's the NT's use of this source text (modified to match the Greek sense and word order):

- (i) Mtt. 18:16 upon *the* mouth of two witnesses or three may stand every word.²³
- (ii) 2 Cor. 13:1 upon *the* mouth of two witnesses and three shall stand every word.

Observations

- These two NT passages have no introductory formula (like 'it is written') to identify an OT source.
- They match Deut. 19:15 closely, in almost 'word-for-word' correspondence.
- The OT source text repeats 'upon the mouth of' but the NT does not. And, the NT has 'every' whereas the OT implies 'the'/'a' attached to 'word.'
- In the Greek NT, as can be seen in the English translations above, Mtt. 18:16 & 2 Cor. 13:1 differ only slightly from each other. Mtt. 18:16 has 'or' and 'may stand,' and 2 Cor. 13:1 has 'and' plus 'shall stand.' Mtt. 18:16 with 'or' matches the Hebrew of Deut. 19:15. (In terms of logic, this shows the Hebrew and Greek 'or' is inclusive, as 'and' can be its replacement.)

A conclusion

- (a) Neither passage has an introduction like 'it is written,' nor is a source like "your Law" mentioned, as when this passage is used (but differently presented) by Jesus in Jn. 8:17: "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true." However, since these two parallel NT passages (Mtt. 18:16 & 2 Co 13:1) align with Jesus' different presentation of this same principle in Jn. 8:17, in effect, this introductory phrase can be applied to them, too. Therefore, this confirms the existence of an OT written source, as identified by "your law", for this principle.
- (b) The *form* of 'quotation' represented by Mtt. 18:16 & 2 Cor. 13:1 is comparable to some literal, or closely literal, NT quotations introduced by "it is written" (see [B], below). However, Jn. 8:17 shows that the use of 'it is written' does not *guarantee* a literal reproduction of what was written. Although, in their literal form they are not so introduced, nevertheless, so close is their correspondence to Deut. 19:15 that they depend (with, or without the confirmation of Jn. 8:17) on what is *written* by inspiration in Deuteronomy.

²³ For ease of comparison I have translated the original word as 'stand' in all three passages (Deut. 19:15; Mt. 18:16 and 2 Cor. 13:1). The Hebrew *yaqum* (whence *cumi* in "*Talitha cumi*") has the sense of 'stand up' (as in resurrectional passages: e.g. Job 19:25. Infact, in Deut. 19:15 *yaqum* occurs twice, the first time translated with the sense of 'rise up'). Hence, what 'stands,' or 'stands up' to, scrutiny, is what is 'established.' In the NT the Greek forms of *histemi* have the nuance 'may stand' in Mt. 18:16 and 'shall stand' in 2 Co. 13:1. These NT citations complementarily adjust Deut. 19:15 to state what is implicit in theory, or in practice. Another sense given to this same Hebrew term *yaqum* is the Greek term *menei* which is variously rendered by KJV: 'endureth'/'abideth'/'remaineth' which well relate to the idea of 'that which (over time, or despite circumstance) continues to stand.' Cf. Isa. 40:8 in 1 Pet. 1:24-25.

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

- (c) Since Jesus himself has used this near literal reproduction of Deut. 19:15 in Mtt. 18:16, and yet has not introduced it as he has in Jn. 8:17, this shows that the OT can be *recognised*, with or without some introductory phrasing (e.g. "it is written").
- (d) The differences between these two NT passages (Mtt. 18:16 & 2 Cor. 13:1) are informative. For, although in these two parallel cases the differences are small, such, or wider, variations are typical of many NT quotations including other parallel quotations.

The significant point is, that being divergent from each other, and neither being an exact copy of their OT source, nothing doubtful can fairly be attributed to the OT source itself. Inaccuracy, textual error, or misquotation, are not relevant issues. 'Complementary difference' is rather the case.

Hence, this deals with doubtful questions raised about the Hebrew Bible and whether where the NT diverges from it the MT is the source of the quotation. For this case does not prove that another Hebrew text not now extant is the source cited verbatim by NT. Both NT parallel passages include (simple) differences, so if neither is from M which Gospel is drawing on some non-extant Hebrew text? **More extreme NT quotational differences reinforce this kind of evidence and leave objectors to MT without a credible case. Where are we told quotations have to be verbatim?**

- (e) These differences help us to understand, or have access to, how Scriptural meaning operates. However, with the variation 'and' and 'or,' it is simply that their meaning, or function, is (logically) synonymous. Deut. 19:15 and Mtt. 18:16's 'or' does not limit the number to two, this is the legal minimum. The principle provides equal status to three as well as to two. Thus 2 Cor.13:1's 'or' has an inclusive ('and') rather than an exclusive ('not both') sense: two must apply, but so also can three (or perhaps more). This is *sense-for-sense*, rather than *word-for-word*, presentation.

The NT's addition of 'every' attached to 'word' makes explicit what is implicit in the OT Law. *Each* significant verbal component of the word, or statement, expressed must have the same truth value. 'Word' (OT) is used for that which spoken, 'every word' (NT) for each of its total verbal components. The (whole) word stands if every constituent word stands. Thus, these lexical (word) differences do not produce contrary semantic (meaning) differences. Even though these are less divergent parallel quotations, such minor features of variation are, in principle, instances of what can be termed 'complementary difference'.¹²⁴

[B] "The first, or great, commandment in the law"

The quotation of Deut. 6:5, below, occurs in a parallel account in Matt. 22 & Mk 12. This OT passage also occurs in Lk. 10:27, but not in Lk. 20, which appears to be parallel to

²⁴ In Jn. 8:17 Jesus' style is to make 'allusive reference' to this principle in Deut. 19:15: "And it is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true." Interestingly, Jesus' use of 'true', here, makes it equivalent to his use of 'stand' in Mt. 18:16. Other examples of 'allusive reference' involving this 'witnessing' principle: "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before **two or three witnesses**" (1Ti. 5:19). Or, Heb. 10:28: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under **two or three witnesses**" (cf. Deut 17:6 "At mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; [but] at mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.")

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

Mtt. 22 & Mk. 12. I shall, therefore, compare these latter two passages first, given the common context.

Matthew 22 and Mark 12

OT source cited in the NT

KJV Deut. 6:5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with (or 'in') all thine heart, and with (or 'in') all thy soul, and with (or 'in') all thy might.

NT (Gospel parallel) use made of this source text

Mtt. 22:37 Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with (or 'in') all thy heart, and with (or 'in') all thy soul, and with (or 'in') all thy mind.

Mk. 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with (or 'out of') all thy heart, and with (or 'out of') all thy soul, and with (or 'out of') all thy mind, and with (or 'out of') all thy strength.

Observations

These two parallel passages in the Gospels exhibit variations of reportage, or presentation, similar to what we saw earlier when we compared Mtt. 12:46-50, Mk. 3:31-35 and Lk. 8:19-21. Also within these parallel Gospels is a parallel quotation taken from Deuteronomy. However, a striking difference is that although Deut. 6:5 occurs in both Gospels, Deut. 6:4 which is inserted prior to Deut. 6:5 in Mk. 12:30, as part of "the first of all the commandments," does not appear in the parallel context in Matthew 22. So, these two parallel texts are useful to consider because they contain both variation in reportage *and* variation in quotation. We shall consider how Deut. 6:5 is presented in both Gospels.

[1] Omission: Material in one Gospel which is missing from the other:

- Matthew does not have "and with all thy strength" although Mark does.

[2] Omission: Material in the OT which is missing from the NT:

- Matthew does not match the Hebrew text in its omission of "and with all thy strength."

[3] Addition: Material which is added in the NT:

- Both Matthew and Mark have "mind" which is not in the Hebrew text of Deut. 6:5.

[4] Word (or semantic) variation:

The Hebrew text of Deut. 6:5 has 'with' (or an instrumental 'in') attached to each instance of 'all thy.' Matthew's Greek [*en*] agrees with this, but Mark on the other hand has [*ek*] 'out of.'²⁵

²⁵ (i) A relevant question to ask of those who suppose the NT uses 'the' (*sic.*) LXX is, 'How is it that the LXX has departed from the Hebrew? MT has 'in' prefixed repeatedly to 'all thy,' whereas the LXX has the 'out of' [Gk. *ek*] form of Mark (and one instance in Lk. 10:27). If you reply that both Mark and the LXX use an original Hebrew text which differs from MT, then I have to ask what Hebrew text did *Matthew* use? Since Matthew's quotation has '*in* all thy...' and agrees with MT, is not this inspired comment on the originality of the Hebrew of MT? Who is trying to break Scripture, here? (Cf. Lk. 10:27 which combines more variation in the use of these prepositions.)

(ii) My suggestion, with other data, is that since *both* Mark 12: 30 *and* Luke 10:27 have 'out of,' this easily convinced a 'Christian LXX' editor to adopt this NT originated change. Agreement between LXX and NT is limited, and in many cases clearly contrived. Scholars accept that many of the unexpected textual

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

This important difference exposes what is entailed in the context of Deut 6. 'Out of' (NT Mark), complementing 'with'/'in' (OT and NT Matthew), stresses the *result from within*. The outcome of what is 'in,' or done 'with' ('all thy...') is: "out of the heart (soul, mind and strength) of man," transformed by the Gospel, proceeds the love of God. Thereby the commandment is fulfilled.

<u>KJV Deut.</u> <u>6:5</u> heart soul might	<u>KJV Matt.</u> <u>22:37</u> heart soul mind	<u>KJV Mark</u> <u>12:30</u> heart soul mind strength	<u>KJV Luke</u> <u>10:27</u> heart soul strength mind
--	---	--	--

In Deut. 6:6, another level operates. For God's commandments to be fulfilled they must first be inscribed 'upon' the heart (as they were to be 'upon' the doorposts). It is 'out of' the "fleshy tables of the heart" (KJV 2 Cor. 3:3) upon which the Word is written that God can be loved with the totality of one's being.²⁶ Thus, Deut. 6:6 Hebrew should be rendered:

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thine heart.

Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27

<u>Matthew 22:37</u> Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with/in all thy heart, and with/ in all thy soul, and with/in all thy mind.	<u>Mark 12:30</u> And thou shalt love the Lord thy God out of all thy heart, and out of all thy soul, and out of all thy mind, and out of all thy strength.	<u>Luke 10:27</u> Thou shalt love the Lord thy God out of all thy heart, and with/in all thy soul, and with/in all thy strength, and with/in all thy mind.
---	--	---

Finally, although Lk. 10:27 (above) is not surrounded by the extended issues found in Matthew 22 and in Mark 12, it is also an instance of Deut. 6:5. For this reason, Deut.

deviations in the LXX reflect later editorial revisions rather than necessarily being ascribed to the original translators. (See Barnes' "concluding observation" in (iii), below.)

(iii) Cf. n. 3, above, and see S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, (OUP 1968): 322. In the section, 'The Hebrew Text and the Septuagint,' he underlines the point I make in his last paragraph. Jellicoe states, having considered a particular case: "We have taken this particular reading as affording an example of the extreme care which must be exercised in deciding against M in what would seem, quite plausibly, to be in favour of LXX. But when it is recognised, though too often overlooked, that the Greek version was made initially for Jews by Jews - a fact continually underlined by H. M. Orlinsky and constituting Rahlfs' opening statement in his 'History of the Septuagint Text' [*Septuaginta*, Stuttgart: Privileg. Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935, Vol. I, XXIII-XXIV] we must take into full consideration Barnes' concluding observation: 'In weighing readings we must use all the knowledge we can gain of Jewish exegesis and of Haggadic (or Halachic) comment. Some LXX readings which sound strange to Gentiles ears will prove to be right: while some readings (**due to Christian modifications of the text, intentional or accidental**) will have to be rejected as too definitely Christian.' [My bold type.]

²⁶ In Heb. 8:10 & 10:16, cf. Jer 31:33: 'upon' [Gk., *epi*] the heart and mind occurs paralleling the Hebrew of Deut. 6:6-8.

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

6:5's mode of presentation in Luke can be related to its use in Matthew and Mark. Noticeably, Lk. 10:27 is like a mixture of Mk. 12:30 and Mtt. 22:37, but it also has some agreement, where they do not, with M. The comparative table below shows this by how the terms 'with/'in' and 'out of' are distributed.

Deut. 6:5	Mtt. 22:37	Mk. 12:30	Lk. 10:27
with/in (3x)	with/in (3x)	out of (4x)	out of (1x)
			with/in (3x)

Deut 6:5 has 'heart - soul - might (or 'strength').' This order matches Lk. 10:27 (but Deuteronomy does not have the word 'mind' which occurs in all three Gospels.)

A conclusion

Resulting from this data and analysis it is clear that whilst all three Gospels diverge from the OT, they each have points of contact with the Hebrew text.

None of these Gospel quotational parallels supports the possibility of the use of a Hebrew source other than M. Consider the difficulties for such a possibility:

(a) Matthew has 'with/'in' as does MT; Luke has 'with/'in' like Matthew and MT, but also includes one instance of the NT's 'out of' found exclusively in Mark.

So, if Matthew represents inspired support for MT, in this respect, where does it leave Mark and Luke? They are each a mixture of agreement and variation, both with each other and with the OT. Does it require another source, scrolls of the law which differ from MT, for Mark and Luke's presentation? Surely not! These differences are NT derived. Surely, even if one Gospel does give the actual spoken words of Jesus, he would understand any variation from it to be true of what he had in mind.

(b) Luke agrees exactly with MT with 'heart - soul - might (or 'strength'),' so this supports MT, whereas Matthew and Mark differ in this word order. In which case, this would mean that Matthew agrees with MT over 'with/'in' but against MT, unlike Luke, over 'heart - soul - might (or 'strength').' Yet 'mind' which does not occur in MT is common to all three. Since all three Gospels are inspired and yet

differ from each other, and from MT, divergence is not proof against inspiration, or against the textual reliability of MT. Inspired variation in the NT's usage of quotation cannot be offered as evidence that MT (as the only extant Hebrew copy of the whole OT) is not the inspired quotational source.

The conclusion

Above all, what these variations tell us is that parallel quotations, like the Gospel narrative parallels, provide interpretative readings selectively ordered by the Holy Spirit. It is the NT which is responsible for the changes which occur in both the parallel and the non-parallel quotations of the OT. Though variations, whether these or other examples, provoke a varied response, or cause difficulty for some, they are part of a mode of

Why do New Testament quotations often differ from their Old Testament source?

presentation designed to promote belief (Jn 20:30-31). Textual differences are therefore complementary facets of inspired Scripture.

Hence being a common feature of The Bible, rather than 'breaking' Scripture, such *complementary difference* is its (sophisticated or higher-level) strength.

.....