

St. Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology

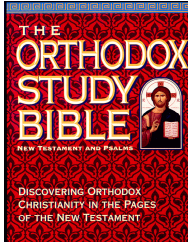
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The Most Rev. Metropolitan PHILIP, Primate

The V. Rev. Fr. Jon Braun, President

April 2014

Dear Friend of St. Athanasius Academy:



ORTHODOX STUDY BIBLE: OLD TESTAMENT SEPTUAGINT

Its Importance To You

It is helpful to keep in mind that like the earliest Christian community, the Orthodox Church continues using the 49 books of the Greek version of the Old Testament called the Septuagint (LXX). It was produced by seventy of the finest Jewish scholars, who were gathered together in Alexandria some three centuries before the birth of Jesus, our Christ. It became the universally accepted version of the Old Testament. These inspired Old Testament books tell the story of the God of all, and His working with ancient Israel.

A study of the Old Testament in the light of the authentic apostolic tradition will lead the reader to Him who fulfilled the Law and the prophets – our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ. This collection is traditionally subdivided into four sections: 1) books of the law; 2) the books of history; 3) the books of wisdom and; 4) the books of prophecy. When the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, with his apostles and evangelists, are recorded in the New Testament, the LXX is generally quoted.

Being divinely inspired, the Bible possesses a fundamental unity guided by the same One spirit, from Genesis to revelation. It is humanly expressed by different persons in widely diverse situations, with God speaking "in many in various ways" (Heb 1:1). It reflects the outlook of the age when written and the author's own viewpoint. For God does not abolish our created personhood but enhances it. In the words of the second century *Letter to Doignetus*, "God persuades, he does not compel; for violence is foreign to the divine nature." Truly, Divine grace and human freedom co-operated in producing the Scriptures (1 Co 3:9). No author was a passive instrument, a flute played by the Spirit, or dictation machine recording a message.

The fullness of the understanding of the Scriptures cannot be obtained outside the of the church. Heretics and unbelieving intellectuals, may read His words, but they cannot understand their beauty. Certainly the Holy Spirit has whispered His truth into the ears of people not in the church. But it is within His Church the Holy Spirit speaks to the fullness of the faith. For it is here, we become able to proclaim the truth found in the Bible. It is here, we can begin our true work of breaking out of the self-imposed imprisonment of self-idolatry. For when we submit our lives to Christ Jesus – in repentance, forgiveness, and humility – the Holy Spirit comes to us, within the holy mysteries, and lifts us up. Therefore, let us joyfully and ceaselessly knock on the doors of the Scriptures, asking our Lord to reveal His Truth and Grace to us through His Word Incarnate, Jesus our Christ.

In the Peace of His Incarnation.

Sincerely, Paul Goetz

This letter is an edited excerpt from three letters found in the OSB-Old and New Testament, concerning the Septuagint. The three authors are:

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