

The grace and peace of our Lord be with you.

As I promised, I am including parts of two ancient writings dating to the second century. The first belongs to Justin Martyr, who lived A.D. 110-165, and died as a Christian martyr. He was born in Samaria as a Gentile, embraced Christianity, and wrote many important writings, many of which perished, but few survived. The following is a section of his "First Apology." Apologies were treatises written in defense of Christians and Christianity. In the following paragraphs, he quotes Psalm 96 (according to King James and the Arabic Bible) which corresponds to Psalm 95 according to the Coptic Bible. If you compare the psalm quoted here to the Arabic, you will find it different. The part in Bold type is not found in either the Arabic or the King James, but is found in the Coptic (look at your Agpeya, Ninth hour, first Psalm (Psalm 95) The reason for this is that both the King James and the Arabic translated from the Hebrew available (13 century copy) while the Coptic was translated from the Septuagint which had been translated 200 years before Christ. As Justin himself tells us, the Jews took out this part from their Psalm because the Christians were using it as a prophesy about the crucifixion of Jesus on a tree (literally "the wood")

The second reference is from Irenaeus third book against the heresies. Irenaeus lived A.D. 120-201. He was the Bishop of Lyons in France. He was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of Saint John, the beloved disciple of our Lord Jesus. He criticizes the use of the Hebrew and says that the only copy of the Old Testament known to the Disciples was the Septuagint translated in Egypt two centuries before Christ. He actually says that "God has preserved to us the unadulterated Scriptures in Egypt" The Coptic Old Testament was taken directly from the Septuagint and not from the Hebrew, and as thus is more accurate than either the King James or the Arabic Bible available to us.

JUSTIN MARTYR: THE FIRST APOLOGY OF JUSTIN

CHAP. XLI.--THE CRUCIFIXION PREDICTED.

And again, in another prophecy, the Spirit of prophecy, through the same David, intimated that Christ, after He had been crucified, should reign, and spoke as follows: "Sing to the Lord, all the earth, and day by day declare His salvation. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, to be feared above all the gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols of devils; but God made the heavens. Glory and praise are before His face, strength and glorying are in the habitation of His holiness. Give Glory to the Lord, the Father everlasting. Receive grace, and enter His presence, and worship in His holy courts. Let all the earth fear before His face; let it be established, and not shaken. Let them rejoice among the nations. **The Lord hath reigned from the tree.**"

CHAP. XLII.--PROPHECY USING THE PAST TENSE.

But when the Spirit of prophecy speaks of things that are about to come to pass as if they had already taken place,--as may be observed even in the passages already cited by me,--that this

circumstance may afford no excuse to readers [for misinterpreting them], we will make even this also quite plain. The things which He absolutely knows will take place, He predicts as if already they had taken place. And that the utterances must be thus received, you will perceive, if you give your attention to them. The words cited above, David uttered 1500 years before Christ became a man and was crucified; and no one of those who lived before Him, nor yet of His contemporaries, afforded joy to the Gentiles by being crucified. But our Jesus Christ, being crucified and dead, rose again, and having ascended to heaven, reigned; and by those things which were published in His name among all nations by the apostles, there is joy afforded to those who expect the immortality promised by Him.

IRENÆUS AGAINST HERESIES -- BOOK III

CHAP. XXI.--A VINDICATION OF THE PROPHECY IN ISAIAH (VII. 14) AGAINST THE MISINTERPRETATIONS OF THEODOTION, AQUILA, THE EBIONITES, AND THE JEWS. **AUTHORITY OF THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION.** ARGUMENTS IN PROOF THAT CHRIST WAS BORN OF A VIRGIN.

1. God, then, was made man, and the Lord did Himself save us, giving us the token of the Virgin. But not as some allege, among those now presuming to expound the Scripture, [thus:] "Behold, a young woman shall conceive, and bring forth a son," as Theodotion the Ephesian has interpreted, and Aquila of Pontus, both Jewish proselytes. The Ebionites, following these, assert that He was begotten by Joseph; thus destroying, as far as in them lies, such a marvellous dispensation of God, and setting aside the testimony of the prophets which proceeded from God. **For truly this prediction was uttered before the removal of the people to Babylon; that is, anterior to the supremacy acquired by the Medes and Persians. But it was interpreted into Greek by the Jews themselves, much before the period of our Lord's advent,** that there might remain no suspicion that perchance the Jews, complying with our humour, did put this interpretation upon these words. They indeed, had they been cognizant of our future existence, and that we should use these proofs from the Scriptures, would themselves never have hesitated to burn their own Scriptures, which do declare that all other nations partake of [eternal] life, and show that they who boast themselves as being the house of Jacob and the people of Israel, are disinherited from the grace of God.

2. **For before the Romans possessed their kingdom, while as yet the Macedonians held Asia, Ptolemy the son of Lagus, being anxious to adorn the library which he had founded in Alexandria, with a collection of the writings of all men, which were [works] of merit, made request to the people of Jerusalem, that they should have their Scriptures translated into the Greek language.** And they--for at that time they were still subject to the Macedonians--sent to Ptolemy seventy of their elders, who were thoroughly skilled in the Scriptures and in both the languages, to carry out what he had desired. But he, wishing to test them individually, and fearing lest they might perchance, by taking counsel together, conceal the truth in the Scriptures, by their interpretation, separated them from each other, and commanded them all to write the same translation. He did this with respect to all the books. But when they came together in the same place before Ptolemy, and each of them compared his own interpretation with that of every other, **God was indeed glorified, and the Scriptures were acknowledged as truly divine. For**

all of them read out the common translation [which they had prepared] in the very same words and the very same names, from beginning to end, so that even the Gentiles present perceived that the Scriptures had been interpreted by the inspiration of God. And there was nothing astonishing in God having done this,--He who, when, **during the captivity of the people under Nebuchadnezzar, the Scriptures had been corrupted,** and when, after seventy years, the Jews had returned to their own land, then, in the times of Artaxerxes king of the Persians, inspired Esdras the priest, of the tribe of Levi, to recast all the words of the former prophets, and to re-establish with the people the Mosaic legislation.

3. **Since, therefore, the Scriptures have been interpreted with such fidelity, and by the grace of God, and since from these God has prepared and formed again our faith towards His Son, and has preserved to us the unadulterated Scriptures in Egypt, where the house of Jacob flourished, fleeing from the famine in Canaan; where also our Lord was preserved when He fled from the persecution set on foot by Herod; and [since] this interpretation of these Scriptures was made prior to our Lord's descent [to earth], and came into being before the Christians appeared--for our Lord was born about the forty-first year of the reign of Augustus; but Ptolemy was much earlier, under whom the Scriptures were interpreted;--[since these things are so, I say,] truly these men are proved to be impudent and presumptuous, who would now show a desire to make different translations, when we refute them out of these Scriptures, and shut them up to a belief in the advent of the Son of God. But our faith is steadfast, unfeigned, and the only true one, having clear proof from these Scriptures, which were interpreted in the way I have related; and the preaching of the Church is without interpolation. For the apostles, since they are of more ancient date than all these [heretics], agree with this aforesaid translation; and the translation harmonizes with the tradition of the apostles. For Peter, and John, and Matthew, and Paul, and the rest successively, as well as their followers, did set forth all prophetic [announcements], just as the interpretation of the elders contains them.**

I hope you enjoy reading this, and if you have any further questions please ask me.

Love,

Abouna.

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."

(One hundred years ago, it was thought that the fourth century uncial manuscript known as Vaticanus reflected a neutral

Septuagint text - neutral in the sense that it is relatively unaffected by Origen, Lucian and Hesychius' efforts.

Alexandrinus was said to show signs of both Origen and Lucian's revisions. But the frequent correspondence between

Alexandrinus and the New Testament suggested that it preserved a more ancient text.