

# ***WATCHMAN'S TEACHING LETTER***

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## **TO THOSE WHOM THE COVENANT BELONGS**

### **A NON-UNIVERSAL CULTURE AWARENESS INSTRUCTIONAL PUBLICATION**

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### **A MONTHLY TEACHING LETTER**

This is my one hundred twenty-first monthly teaching letter and begins my eleventh year of publication. With this lesson it will be necessary to back up and review parts of lesson #'s 119 and 120, for there were important topics brought to the fore which call for further comment. This review will indirectly influence what we understand concerning the writings of the apostle Paul. In both of those lessons we saw there were serious mistranslations from the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek Septuagint. As I stated in lesson #119, 'Some of the people who establish incorrect premises are those who advocate the Septuagint-only for the study of the Old Testament. While the Septuagint is a valuable tool, it isn't perfect in all aspects, as some assert.' V.S. Herrell is an example of a person who advocates the Septuagint-only for such study. William Finck, writing to a Septuagint-only proponent explained to him: "Surely your error is caused – at least in part – by the fact that the LXX translators in many places read 'Canaanite' from the Hebrew text, and then errantly wrote 'Phoenician' in Greek! ... For the LXX translators to have rendered 'Canaanite' as 'Phoenician' is misleading, at best." Later Finck explained: "While it is very likely that the Phoenician colonists of Europe had some Canaanites among them, both slaves and merchants, it is certain that the Phoenicians of the colonizing period were indeed Israelites. ... Insisting that the ancient Phoenicians were Canaanites, and not Israelites, is to follow the Jewish version of history, which allows them to continue masquerading as Israelites." Later, again Finck stated: "The LXX certainly has its flaws, in areas not only of translation, but in the prophets, where much room is open to interpretation while translating, and where certain Hebrew idioms appear, which don't translate so readily into the Greek and which the LXX renders poorly in places."

My summation to Finck's exposé was: 'It should be apparent here that if one relies upon only the Septuagint for one's study of the Old Testament, one will ultimately become confused with the question of who are the true full-blooded Israelites, and who are the usurping Edomite-Canaanites pretending to be Israelites. Surely this is a dangerous position!' All of this begs the question: How could the Septuagint translators have made so serious an error as to render "Canaanite" as "Phoenician"? Well, I will

now give you my own opinion. The Greek Septuagint version was supposedly translated from the Hebrew approximately 250 to 200 B.C., and it is necessary for us to consider the history of Judaea at that time. By that time all of the ten northern tribes of Israel had gone into Assyrian captivity, along with about two-thirds of the southern kingdom of Judah. The remaining one-third of the Judah nation then went into captivity in Babylon with only a fraction returning to Jerusalem seventy years later. By the time the Septuagint was translated, Judaea was well on its way to becoming a multiracial nation of half-breed Canaanites, and the Edomites had long before migrated into southern Judaea, ceding Petra to the Nabatean Arabs.

From the *New Bible Commentary*, 21st Century Edition, under “Places and People” on Obadiah 1, we read: “In the sixth century BC, Edom itself was waning, as is revealed by archaeological sources. Towns were abandoned and populations shifted (cf. 1 Macc. 5:65). Arabs gained control of this geographical area between the sixth and fourth centuries BC (cf. Ne. 2:19; 4:7; 6:1). The Nabateans, in particular, displaced the Edomites, forcing some of them into southern Judah, which became known by the Hellenized name Idumea (1 Macc. 4:29), based on the Hebrew ‘Edom’.” At the time the Septuagint was translated, it is evident that many Canaanites and Edomites were occupying the former land known as Phoenicia along the coast of the Mediterranean, in what is known today as Palestine. The Judahites who translated the Septuagint obviously knew this and labeled the Canaanites and Edomites living there during their time by the Greek geographical term of Phoenicia, thus “Phoenicians”. It’s the same type of mistake we make today with Ruth being called a Moabite, during the judges period, because she came from a land once known as Moab before Moab was conquered and absorbed by the Amorites, and in turn, the Amorites were conquered and destroyed by the Israelites and then Moab was resettled by them during the Joshua period. It is recorded at Joshua 18:7 that half of the tribe of Manasseh, along with the tribes of Gad and Reuben, moved into the former land of Moab east of the Jordan. Therefore, Ruth was an Israelite lady living in a former geographic area known as Moab. While my theory of the Septuagint translators mistakenly rendering “Canaanite” as “Phoenician”, based on geographic area, may be conjecture on my part, there is absolutely no Biblical uncertainty that Ruth was genetically an Israelite! But to label racial Canaanites as Phoenicians and Ruth as a racial Moabite are both very serious errors.

Almost every Bible commentary takes the same position as the errant Septuagint; that the Phoenicians were Canaanites. Although they claim this time and again, they never once trace a single Phoenician to a Canaanite tribe or progenitor. Rather than use Bible commentaries on the subject of the Phoenicians, Bible dictionaries cover the topic much better. But use caution even when consulting a Bible dictionary. One of my many Bible dictionaries is *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* and here I will quote from pages 990-991:

“**PHOENICIANS** ... inhabitants of PHOENICIA, the ancient nation along the Mediterranean Sea north of Palestine. The Phoenicians were known for their trade and commerce and their skill as a seafaring people. There were three major reasons why Phoenicia became a major trading power.

“ First, the Phoenicians lived on a narrow strip of coastland. Thus hemmed in, they took to the sea in order to expand their economy, eventually becoming one of the most distinguished seafaring peoples in history.

“ Second, the mountains that approach the Phoenician coast made travel by land unusually difficult; travel by sea was the logical alternative.

“ Finally, the plentiful supply of pine, cypress, and cedar trees in Phoenicia made shipbuilding an ideal pursuit for the Phoenician people. The men of Byblos were noted shipbuilders (Ezek. 27:9), and the people of the Phoenician city of Sidon were experts at felling trees (1 Kin. 5:6).

“ Phoenicia’s two major ports, Tyre and Sidon, were semi-independent city-states. Besides these two, several other Phoenician cities grew in influence as the merchant fleets brought wealth into the country. By its ‘ golden age ’ (about 1050-850 B.C.) the Phoenicians achieved their height of prosperity and influence. Phoenicia founded many colonies along shipping routes, so that Phoenicians lived in Crete, Cyprus, Sardinia, Sicily, North Africa (especially the important colony of Carthage), and even Spain.

“ In the course of their travels, Phoenician merchants developed many skills that had a lasting influence on world culture. They are usually given credit for originating the alphabet and for pioneering the skills of glassmaking and the dyeing of cloth. Scholars believe Solomon’s Temple and many of its furnishings were based on a Phoenician design.

“ Some archaeologists believe that the Phoenicians were extremely skilled in working with gold, iron, and copper, and that they were skilled jewelers. Also, Phoenician designs possibly inspired much of Greek, Assyrian, and Etruscan architecture.

“ As the Assyrians began to dominate the ancient world in the eighth century B.C., Phoenicia’s influence declined. Phoenicia was progressively weakened in wars with Assyria during the seventh century B.C. In 585 B.C. the Babylonians, who had conquered Assyria only two decades earlier, laid siege to Tyre – the last remaining independent Phoenician city.

“ After 13 years of siege (585-572 B.C.), the mainland city of Tyre was captured. There was also an island city of Tyre, which did not fall until 332 B.C. when Alexander the Great built a causeway over half a mile long in order to reach it. Alexander destroyed the city, but Tyre was later rebuilt. The city was an important outpost in the Greek and Roman period.

“ Like its neighbor Israel, Phoenicia finally ceased to be an independent nation. It was dominated in turn by the Persians, Greeks, Seleucids, and Romans.

“ ***Phoenician Religion.*** Phoenician gods were male and female representations of nature. Their primary god was called Baal. He combined the attributes of several other Phoenician deities, including Hadad, the storm god; Shamash, the sun god; and Resheph, god of the earth and the netherworld. The Phoenician goddess honored as the ‘ great mother ’ was called Ashtoreth. Additionally, Eshmun, the god of healing, was especially honored in Sidon.

**“Connections with the Old Testament.** When David completed the conquest of the Promised Land and made Israel the strongest power in the area, the Phoenicians under Hiram of Tyre (981-947 B.C.) became involved commercially with the Israelites (2 Sam. 5:11). The Phoenicians of Tyre helped supply materials and laborers for the building of Solomon’s Temple (1 Kin. 5:1-12). In later years, Solomon bought Hiram’s help by transferring ownership of large tracts of real estate in Galilee from Israel to Tyre (1 Kin. 9:11).

“The Phoenicians also helped the Israelites in Solomon’s kingdom to learn the shipping trade and to construct a merchant fleet that brought wealth to Israel (1 Kin. 9:26-28). Regrettably, Solomon fell under the influence of foreign religions later in his life.

“These problems included worship of the Phoenician idol Ashtoreth, the supreme goddess of the Sidonians (1 Kin. 11:1-8). His turning from the Lord [sic Yahweh] to the beliefs of people such as the Phoenicians [sic Canaanites] resulted in the division of the nation – an act of Judgment by God (1 Kin 11:9-13). ...

“Although the Bible mentions Phoenicia rarely [sic not at all], it [does] often refer to the major Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon. Isaiah (23:1-18), Jeremiah (25:22; 47:4), Ezekiel (26:2–28:23) and other Old Testament prophets predicted the judgment of God on Tyre and Sidon. This judgment came in large measure when the Babylonians captured these cities along with the rest of Phoenicia in the early sixth century B.C.

**“Connections with the New Testament.** Phoenicians were among those who came to hear Jesus [sic Yahshua] teach about the kingdom of God (Luke 6:17). After the death of Stephen, some Christians escaped persecution by going to Phoenicia, where they preached the gospel (Acts 11:19). The apostle Paul traveled through Phoenicia on more than one occasion (Acts 15:3; 21:2-3).”

While this may not be a perfect nor a complete assessment of the Biblical Phoenicians, you will notice that the Nelson editors didn’t once mention anything about the Phoenicians being Canaanites. When scrutinizing various sources on such subjects, one should always observe whether the author cites the Greek Classics, various histories and archaeological findings to support any of his conclusions. It should be noted from Nelson’s article that Solomon entered into many compacts with the Phoenicians under Hiram of Tyre. Had the Phoenicians been Canaanites, this would have been strictly forbidden under Yahweh’s law, and the prophets would have rebuked Solomon for any such covenant with them! Deut. 7:1-2 states: “<sup>1</sup> **When Yahweh thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; <sup>2</sup> And when Yahweh thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them.**” Had Solomon made any such unlawful agreement with any Canaanites to help build the Temple, Yahweh wouldn’t have allowed His Spirit to enter it, for it would have been an agreement with Satan! **NO!** The Phoenicians were definitely not Canaanites!

How could any Canaanites have accomplished such a feat as the Phoenicians did, as Herodotus records at *The History*, 4.42? The following is from *The History*, by Herodotus by David Grene, pages 293-296 & 668: “42. I am surprised, then, at those who have drawn the boundaries and made the divisions of Libya, Asia, and Europe. For the differences between them are great. In length Europe stretches parallel to *both* of them, and in breadth it seems to me incomparably broader. For Libya is clearly surrounded by the sea except for its boundary with Asia; it was King Necos of Egypt who, first of the men we know, proved this. When he had stopped digging the channel from the Nile into the Arabian Gulf, he sent off Phoenicians in merchantmen, bidding them, on their return journey, sail through the Pillars of Heracles till they came to the northern sea and so come back to Egypt. The Phoenicians set out from the Red Sea and sailed the southern sea. When it came to be autumn, they would put in and sow the land wherever they happened to be in Libya in the course of their sailing and await the harvest there. Having gathered in their crop, they sailed on again. After two years of sailing, in the third year they rounded the Pillars of Heracles and came back to Egypt. And they declared (what some may believe, though I myself do not) that as they sailed round Libya they had the sun on their right.<sup>26</sup>”

Then Grene’s footnote #26, at the bottom of page 296 reads: “26. This is one of the very striking pieces of information left us by Herodotus. There is now little doubt that these Phoenicians, sent by Necos, circumnavigated Africa, rounding the Cape of Good Hope. See, further, the end note to this passage.”

Then at page 668, Grene states with end note 4.42: “The very circumstance that Herodotus disbelieved, while faithfully mentioning, the Phoenicians’ report that they had had the sun on their right is excellent evidence of what they did. ‘The sun,’ say How and Wells, ‘in the southern hemisphere would actually be ‘on the right,’ so long as they sailed west, and from the Equator to the Cape of Good Hope the course would be south-west and then west, while on the return journey it would be slightly north-west’ (How and Wells, vol. i, p. 318). Herodotus for some reason makes no mention of the discoveries of the Carthaginians, at the beginning of chapter 43, but moves straight on to the abortive journey round Libya undertaken by Sataspes.

“The Zopyrus mentioned in this story is almost certainly a relative of the Zopyrus of book 3, chapters 153–60. It may even be the same man, serving now in the reign of the son instead of the father. The Zopyrus of book 3 had a grandson who deserted to the Athenians, and Herodotus may well have heard the story of the attempted circumnavigation from him.”

A footnote from *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* Second Series, Vol. VIII, under the title “Homily VI. – The Creation of Luminous Bodies” states in part: “... *i.e.* throwing a shadow only one way at noon, - said of those who live north and south of the tropics, while those who live in the tropics cast a shadow sometimes north, sometimes south, *vide* Strabo ii. 5. § 43. It was ‘incredible’ to Herodotus that Necho’s Phoenician mariners, in their circumnavigation of Africa, had ‘the sun on their right hand.’ Her. iv. 42.”

The term “Phoenicia” was first used by the Greeks to refer to the country of the people with whom they traded. Thus, the term originally designated a geographical area

rather than a genetic race of people. This contact in trade started early, around 1200 B.C. Once we understand the meaning of “Phoenicia” in the Greek language, it may become clearer how confusion developed over its use. Phoenicia (Φοινίκη) in the Greek language has the meaning “land of purple”. You will notice that it is speaking of a “land of purple” and not a purple people! Actually, by the time the Greeks began trading with these people, most of the Canaanites had been pushed out of the coastal cities by the Israelites during the conquest at the time of Joshua and the early judges. That Israelites took possession of and inhabited the coastal cities by this time is fully attested to in the Bible, and especially the Septuagint. The Greeks called these people “Phoenicians”, and they were a very industrious people and were skilled in sailing ships, the making of glass, inventing an alphabet, designing architecture and most anything they set their mind and hand to do. They were a very industrious people and developers of civilization. On the other hand, the Canaanites were always a parasitic people with very low morals. Yet because both of these groups dwelt in the “land of purple”, at various times they were both referred to as Phoenicians, or people of the “land of purple” – where the purple dye of the murex shellfish was harvested and employed in manufacturing. **It was not an ethnic term!**

You will notice in Herodotus’ account of the Phoenicians that Neco gave the instruction to them, “... When it came to be autumn, they would put in and sow the land wherever they happened to be in Libya in the course of their sailing and wait the harvest there ...”. It is obvious from this that the Phoenicians were also farmers. Had they been Canaanite-jews, they would have had the curse of Cain upon them that, “... When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength ...”, Gen. 4:12. Had those Phoenicians been Canaanite-jews, they would have starved to death before they got back to Egypt three years later! How many bad-fig-jews do you know today that are farmers? Rather than being farmers, they operate junkyards or landfills or loan out money (credit) at interest!

Moreover, had the Phoenicians been genetic Canaanite-jews as some of the Septuagint-only advocates assert, the prophets would have highly condemned any alliance between Solomon and the king of Tyre in their extensive joint naval venture bringing in and exporting raw materials and finished products from all over the then known world!

For those who have done any serious research concerning the history of the twelve tribes of Israel already know that some of the tribes of Zerah-Judah and Dan left Egypt before the main body crossed through the Red Sea (or whatever body of water it was). It is my opinion that these two tribes left mainly by sea, as they would have found stiff resistance had they tried to traverse Retenu and Amurru (as Palestine was called at that time) by land. And as they made their way to distant destinations, they would have hopped from one island to another, using them as safe havens. Later, during the Joshua period, there is recorded at Josh. 17:7-11 and 19: 24-31 a description of the land that fell by lot to Asher which included much of Phoenicia, Zidon (Sidon) & Tyre. And since Asher inherited much of the land later known as Phoenicia, the name Phoenician (people of the land of purple) began to be used by the Greeks in reference

to them. Whether or not some of Asher left Egypt earlier, as Zerah-Judah and Dan did, cannot be determined.

I did a little research on the subject of the purple dye made from the murex shellfish, and found that many items in the Tabernacle, (even in the wilderness), were colored with such dye. But how did our people get it, as they had not as yet entered the land of Canaan, and would not have had any access to collecting and processing the murex shellfish for use in dyeing these items? If it were the Canaanites who were the workers in purple we, upon entering Canaan, were forbidden to have any business dealings with them. And there is one thing for sure, after we made our exodus out of Egypt the way we did, we couldn't have purchased it from them! The way I see it, the only way we could have gotten any purple dye at that time is, if Zerah-Judah or Dan were in the purple dye business. After all, Rahab, a descendant of Zerah-Judah, was already in Jericho.

From an article found in the *Saudi Aramco World* entitled "Millennia of Murex" for July-August, 2006 at the Internet website,

[www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200604/millennia.of.murex.htm](http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200604/millennia.of.murex.htm):

"Dye formulae of many kinds were widely known by the time this cuneiform tablet [*not shown*] was inscribed in the seventh century B.C. near Babylon, now in Iraq. It describes the dyeing of wool to shades of 'lapis-lazuli,' which was apparently an attempt to imitate murex.

"The sea meant trade, and by the eighth century B.C., the Phoenicians were established as traders, craftsmen and daring seafarers, and Phoenician sarcophagi depict wealthy businessmen. Perhaps because good business required efficient accounting, the Phoenicians invented an alphabet which was passed on to and adapted by the Greeks – and which became the origin of our own today. Phoenician vessels traveled as far as the British Isles, where they traded for tin in Cornwall and tin, gold, silver and copper in Spain.

"All around the Mediterranean there are wide stretches of beaches composed of crushed murex shells, silent witnesses to the geographical scope and longevity of the Phoenician dyeing industry. One famous Phoenician dye-works was near Cadiz, in the south of Spain; others were in present-day Tunisia, where Carthage was a Phoenician colony. At all these sites, the shellfish were crushed, and the pigment extracted, processed, mixed and used. Gravestones of 'purple merchants' (*purpurarii* or *negotiatores artis purpurariae*) often show a set of scales or hanks of yarn, indicating that here too yarn was dyed before weaving, enabling it to be used for woven patterns and embroidery ...

"When Alexander the Great's troops, marching east in 324 BC, took the Achaemenid winter capital Susa (in today's Iran), they found a vast store of purple robes and cloth in the royal treasury. Afterward, Alexander's generals criticized their leader for swanning around in the all-purple robes 'like a Persian.' To the austerity-loving Greek mind of the time, only a show-off would don such ostentatious luxury. Not long afterward, however, possibly thanks to captive Phoenician dyers, the Greeks learned purple technology themselves. Purple dye works have been excavated in Corinth, and murex shells were depicted on certain Greek coins. Archeologists

excavating the royal Macedonian graves at Vergina found the bones of Cleopatra, Philip II's youngest wife and Alexander the Great's stepmother, wrapped in a breathtaking fabric of the finest purple wool, delicately woven with gold thread. A fragment of that royal shroud has recently been analyzed and proved, not surprisingly, to have been dyed with murex."

At this point in time, I reserve the right to change my mind on this subject should further evidence shed more light on this topic. But one thing I'm quite sure of is that the Canaanite-jews were not the Phoenicians of Scripture! This is not saying that there were not Canaanites among the Asherites, because it is clearly recorded that Asher did not drive them all out. This is also not claiming that, at a later date, more Canaanites and Edomites did not move in to occupy Asher's territory, especially after Asher was taken into captivity by Assyria. And as the Canaanites falsely claim to be Israelites today, no doubt some of them claimed to be Phoenicians after Asher was taken captive. All of this behooves us to search all the evidence and determine just who are the Phoenicians and who are the Canaanites! Surely, it is folly on the part of those who continue to declare them to be synonymous!

In the last two *Watchman's Teaching Letter*, #'s 119 & 120, we have addressed how the Septuagint translators made some errant renderings, such as changing "Canaanite" to "Phoenician" and "innkeeper" to "harlot". Thus far, we have pretty well covered the errant "Canaanite" rendering of the LXX, but a few words must be expressed concerning the errant "harlot" rendering.

Adam Clarke, in his *Commentary On The Bible*, made several outstanding scholarly arguments why Rahab was not a harlot. Here are a couple of excerpts from the research which he made:

"All these circumstances considered, I am fully satisfied that the term זונה *zonah* in the text, which we translate *harlot*, [after the LXX translators and the N.T. authors], should be rendered *tavern* or *innkeeper*, or *hostess*." ...

"It is granted that the Septuagint, which is followed by Heb. xi. 31, and James ii. 25, translate the Hebrew זונה *zonah* by πορνη, which generally signifies a *prostitute*; but it is not absolutely evident that the Septuagint used the word in this sense. Every scholar knows that the Greek word πορνη comes from περναω, to *sell*, as this does from περαω, to *pass from one to another; transire facio a me ad alterum*: DAMM. But may not this be spoken as well of the woman's *goods* as of her *person*? In this sense the Chaldee Targum understood the term, and has therefore translated it פונדקיתא אחרא *ittetha pundekitha, a woman, a TAVERN-KEEPER* ..."

Then I made the following two comments: And as Paul was influenced by the Septuagint at Hebrews 11:31, and James at 2:25, they too, innocently followed a flawed translation not of their own making! ... Once we understand that the word should have been "zoon" rather than "zonah", we can begin to see that Rahab either owned or had a concession on a combination hotel and restaurant.

The object of this lesson is to demonstrate how serious some of these errant translations from the Hebrew into the Greek can be. But we don't throw either the Masoretic or the Septuagint texts away as each have both their profound and inadequate passages. As a matter of fact, we shouldn't throw any evidence away.

The Septuagint is the outgrowth of an attempt to translate the Old Testament Hebrew text into a Greek format for a Greek speaking people. It was an endeavor begun at Alexandria, Egypt over two hundred years before the birth of Yahshua Christ. Some of the passages in the LXX reflect some of those found among the DSS. Jerome used the LXX in producing his Old Testament of the Latin Vulgate, which is approved by the Roman Catholic Church, and the LXX remains the official Old Testament for the Greek Orthodox Church. And the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches followed the LXX in using the additional books found in the Apocrypha. It was translated from a Hebrew Old Testament text-type that is older than the Masoretic text from which most Old Testaments are translated today. No doubt, Josephus had an earlier Hebrew or Aramaic manuscript to work from than we know about.

In an article on the Internet at [www.scrollpublishing.com/store/Septuagint.html](http://www.scrollpublishing.com/store/Septuagint.html), entitled "Septuagint", it is stated: "This is sad, for the apostles had access to both the Septuagint and to the proto-Masoretic text that was in existence in their time. And they chose to quote from the Septuagint – not the proto-Masoretic text.

"You have probably noticed that many of the Old Testament passages that are quoted in the New Testament don't read the same in the New as they do in the Old. However, if you were using the Septuagint Old Testament, they would [for the most part] read the same.

"For example, notice this passage from the Psalms that is quoted in the Book of Hebrews: 'Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, 'Sacrifice and offering thou hast not desired, but a body thou hast prepared for me' (Heb. 10:5,6). In that passage, Paul is quoting from Psalm 40:6. If you look up Psalm 40:6 in your Bible, you will find that it reads: 'Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired; mine ears Thou hast opened.' That's not how the writer of Hebrews quoted that verse, is it?

"Our Old Testaments don't say anything in Psalms about 'a body Thou hast prepared for me.' Is that not part of Scripture? If it isn't, why did the writer of Hebrews quote it as Scripture? If it is part of Scripture, what justification do we have for using a text that is different from what the apostles were using?

"That is not an isolated example. Such variances between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text are fairly numerous ..." You will notice here that the author has the same conclusion which I came to; that the New Testament writers were working from a LXX text which has flaws, and that the Masoretic Text also has flaws. In addition, the author of this same article writes:

"The Value of the Septuagint: More and more Bible scholars today are recognizing the immense value of the Septuagint and its unique relationship to the New Testament. For example, Bible scholar George Howard points out: 'If the writers of the NT [New Testament] were influenced by secular Greek, they were influenced more by LXX [Septuagint]. Separated from LXX the NT would have been almost unintelligible to the contemporary reader, according to B. Atkinson. ... At any rate, in the past decades there has developed an appreciation for the influence which LXX vocabulary had on NT thought and the contributions in this area of Septuagintal research are still coming. Consequently, the debate over which source is more important for NT lexicography, Greek or Hebrew, will probably be resolved in terms of LXX."

Again, the author here is in agreement with my premise; that although the Septuagint has its flawed renderings, it nevertheless reflects many of the true meanings of an earlier Hebrew version (“proto-Masoretic text”) which we no longer have at hand. And even with its flaws, the Septuagint can be a blessing, as we can understand that the apostles did indeed quote from it. What, then, is the bottom line that all of this boils down to? The answer is, we have no perfect manuscripts to guide us. We have to face the fact that some are more accurate than others. And this doesn’t open the door for anyone to claim he alone is guided by the Spirit, and that we therefore should follow him. Yahweh save us from those who claim “God speaks personally to me”! Our only alternative is to consider and study all of the manuscripts we already have. And as I have said many times, we need a Bible in one hand and a history book in the other! There are those who brag that they never read Bible commentaries. Though the commentaries do contain many absurdities, most of the authors were skilled historians, but even that must be scrutinized. What kind of a Bible student do you wish to be? And are you up to it? Conclusion: A perfect manuscript cannot be found, nor a perfect man, outside of Yahshua Christ. Don’t even look!

Remember Jeremiah 8:8 where it says: “**How will ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD [sic Yahweh] is with us? In vain have the scribes used a false pen.**” (Brenton’s Septuagint)